

SEVEN YEARS
IN
SOUTH AFRICA



DR EMIL HOLUB





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Emil Mohr

Frontispiece.

SEVEN YEARS IN SOUTH AFRICA:

TRAVELS, RESEARCHES, AND HUNTING ADVENTURES,

BETWEEN THE DIAMOND-FIELDS AND THE ZAMBESI (1872-79).

BY

DR. EMIL HOLUB.

TRANSLATED BY ELLEN E. FREWER.

WITH ABOUT TWO HUNDRED ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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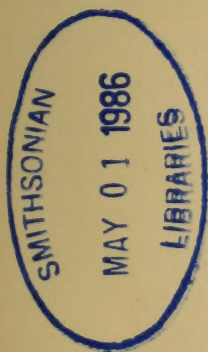
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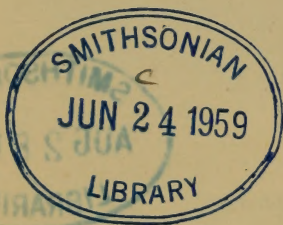
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PREFACE.

FROM the days of my boyhood I had been stirred with the desire to devote myself in some way to the exploration of Africa, and whenever I came across the narratives of travellers who had contributed anything towards the opening up of the dark continent, I only read them to find that they gave a more definite shape to my longings.

It was in 1872 that an opportunity was afforded me of gratifying my wish, and I then decided that South Africa should be the field of my researches. For seven years I applied myself to my undertaking with all the energy, and with the best resources that, as a solitary individual, I could command, and was enabled to make the three journeys which are described in the following pages.

On my third return to the Diamond-fields I was urged by my South African friends immediately to publish an account of my travels; my time, however, was so engrossed by my medical practice that I had no leisure for the purpose, and contented myself with merely sending a few fragmentary articles to some of the South African newspapers.

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But on arriving in London I was again so repeatedly solicited to make public what I had seen, that, on reaching home, I determined to issue these volumes containing an account of the leading incidents in my travelling experiences. To enter into the details of all the scientific observations that I made would occupy me for at least three years, and would interfere altogether with my scheme for returning to Africa as soon as possible, so that I have been satisfied to leave these results of my labours to be worked out by the co-operation of the men of science to whom they may be of interest.

I cherish the hope that these volumes may tend to increase the public interest which is now so powerfully drawn to South Africa, and I trust that the time is not far distant when I may submit to the public some further researches relating to "the continent of the future."

EMIL HOLUB.

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MAP ILLUSTRATING
D'HOLUB'S JOURNEYS
 IN
SOUTH AFRICA
 1872-1879

English Miles
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SEVEN YEARS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

CHAPTER I.

VOYAGE TO THE CAPE—CAPE TOWN—PORT ELIZABETH.

HOWEVER fair and favourable the voyage between Southampton and South Africa, a thrill of new life, a sudden shaking off of lethargy, alike physical and mental, ever responds to the crisp, dry announcement of the captain that the long-looked-for land is actually in sight. As the time draws near when the cry of "Land" may any moment be expected from the mast-head, many is the rush that is made from the luxurious cabin to the deck of the splendid steamer, when with straining eyes the passengers eagerly scan the distant horizon; ever and again in their eagerness do they think they descry a mountain summit on the long line that parts sea and sky; but the mountain proves to be merely the topmast of some distant vessel, and disappointment is intensified by the very longing that had prompted the imagination.

But at last there is no mistake. From a bright light bank of feathery cloud on the south-south-east horizon there is seen a long, blue streak, which every succeeding minute rises obviously more plainly above

the ocean. That far-off streak is the crown of an imposing rock, itself a monument of a memorable crisis in the annals of geographical discovery; it is the crest of Africa's stony beacon, Table Mountain.

Out of the thirty-six days, from May the 26th to July the 1st, 1872, that I spent on board the "Briton" on her passage from Southampton to Cape Town,¹ thirty were stormy. For four whole weeks I suffered from so severe an attack of dysentery that my strength was utterly prostrated, and I hardly ventured to entertain a hope that I should ever reach the shores of South Africa alive. My readers, therefore, will easily understand how my physical weakness, with its accompanying mental depression, gave me an ardent longing to feel dry land once more beneath my feet, especially as that land was the goal to which I was hastening with the express purpose of there devoting my energies to scientific research. But almost sinking as I felt myself under my prolonged sufferings, the tidings that the shore was actually in sight had no sooner reached my cabin than I was conscious of a new thrill of life in my veins; and my vigour sensibly revived as I watched until not only Table Mountain, with the Lion's Head on one side and the Devil's Peak on the other, but also the range of

¹ Within the last few years the competition between the "Union Steamship Co." and "Donald Currie and Co." has reduced the length of the voyage from Southampton to Cape Town, *via* Madeira, to eighteen or twenty days.

the Twelve Apostles to the south lay outstretched in all their majesty before my eyes.

Before leaving the "Briton" and setting foot upon African soil, I may briefly relate an adventure that befell me, and which seemed a foretaste of the dangers and difficulties with which I was to meet in South Africa itself. On the 20th of June, after three weeks of such boisterous weather that it had been scarcely possible for a passenger to go on deck at all, we found ourselves off St. Helena. By this time not only had my illness seriously reduced my strength, but the weaker I became the more oppressive did I feel the confined atmosphere of my second-class cabin; my means not having sufficed to engage a first-class berth. On the morning in question I experienced an unusual difficulty in breathing; the surgeon was himself seriously ill, and consequently not in a condition to prescribe; accordingly, taking my own advice, I came to the conclusion that I would put my strength to the test and crawl on deck, where I might at least get some fresh air. It was not without much difficulty that I managed to creep as far as the fore-castle, splashed repeatedly on the way by the spray from the waves that thundered against the bow; still, so delightful was the relief afforded by the breeze to my lungs, that I was conscious only of enjoyment, and entertained no apprehension of mischief from the recurring shower-baths.

But my satisfaction only lasted for a few minutes; I soon became convinced of the extreme imprudence

of getting so thoroughly soaked, and came to the conclusion that I had better make my way back. While I was thus contemplating my return, I caught sight of a gigantic wave towering on towards the ship, and before I could devise any means for my protection, the vessel, trembling to her very centre, ploughed her way into the billow, where the entire fore-castle was quite submerged. My fingers instinctively clutched at the trellis-work of the flooring; but, failing to gain a hold, I was caught up by the retreating flood and carried overboard. Fortunately the lower cross-bar broke my fall, so that instead of being dashed out to sea, I slipped almost perpendicularly down the ship's side. The massive anchor, emblem of hope, proved my deliverance. Between one of its arms and the timbers of the ship I hung suspended, until the boatswain came just in time to my aid, and rescued me from my perilous position.

But to return to Table Mountain, the watch-tower of Cape Colony. In few other points of the coast-line of any continent are the mountains more representative of the form of the inland country than here. At the foot of the three contiguous mountains, Table Mountain, Devil's Peak, and Lion's Head, and guarded, as it were, by their giant mass, reposing, as it might well appear, in one of the most secure and sheltered nooks in the world, lay Cape Town, the scene of my first landing. It is the metropolis of South Africa, the most populous city south of the Zambesi, and the second in importance





CAPE-TOWN.

of all the trade centres in the Anglo-African colonies. Although, perhaps, in actual beauty of situation it cannot rival Funchal, the capital of Madeira, which, with its tiers of terraces on its sloping hill-side, we had had the opportunity of admiring in the course of the voyage, yet there is something about Cape Town which is singularly attractive to the eye of a stranger; he seems at once to experience an involuntary feeling of security as he steams slowly along the shores of Table Bay; and as he gazes on the white buildings (not unfrequently surmounted by slender towers) which rise above the verdure of the streets and gardens, he recognizes what must appear a welcome haven of refuge after the stormy perils of a long sea passage. But appearances here, as often elsewhere, are somewhat deceptive; and as matter of fact, both the town and the bay are at some seasons of the year exposed to violent storms, one consequence of which is that the entire region is filled with frightful clouds of dust. Even in calm weather, the dust raised by the ordinary traffic of the place is so dense and annoying that it is scarcely possible to see a hundred yards ahead; and to escape it as much as possible people of sufficient means only come into the town to transact their business, having their residences in the outskirts at the foot of the adjacent mountains.

This disadvantage is likely to attach to the town for some time to come; first, because there are no practicable means of arresting the storms that break in on the south-east from Simon's Bay; and secondly,

because no measures have yet been taken in hand for paving the streets. It must be acknowledged, however, that within the last few years, during Sir Bartle Frere's administration, the large harbour-works that have been erected have done much to protect the town from the ravages of the ocean,—ravages of which the fragments of wreck that lie scattered along the shores of Table Bay are the silent but incontestable witnesses.

At the time of my arrival, in 1872, our vessel had to be towed very cautiously into the harbour. Mail steamers are now despatched to the colony every week, but at that time they only reached South Africa about twice a month, and it was therefore no wonder that each vessel, as it arrived from the mother-country, should be hailed with delight, and that the signal from the station at the base of the Lion's Head should attract a considerable crowd to the shore. There were many who were expecting relations or friends; there were the postal officials, with a body of subordinates, waiting to receive the mail; and there were large numbers of the coloured population, Malays, Kaffirs, and Hottentots, as well as many representatives of the cross-breeds of each race, who had come to offer their services as porters. All these had found their way to the water's edge, and stood in compact line crowded against the pier. In a few minutes the steamer lay to, and the passengers who, after two days, were to go on to Port Elizabeth hurried on shore to make the most of their time in exploring the town.

At a short distance from the shore, we entered Cape Town by the fish-market. Here, every day except Sunday, the Malay fishermen display an immense variety of fish; and lobsters, standing literally in piles, seem especially to find a ready sale. Any visitor who can steel his olfactory nerves against the strong odour that pervades the atmosphere of the place may here find a singularly ample field for ethnographical and other studies. The Malays, who were introduced into the country about ten years since, have remained faithful to their habits and costume. Imported as fishermen, stone-masons, and tailors, they have continued their own lines of handicraft, whilst they have adopted a new pursuit adapted to their new home and have become very successful as horse-breakers.

Passing along, we were interested in noticing the dusky forms of these men as they busily emptied the contents of their boats into baskets. They were dressed in voluminous linen shirts and trousers; and their conical hats of plaited straw, rushes, or bamboo, were made very large, so as to protect their heads effectually from the sun. Their physiognomy is flat, and not particularly pleasing, but their eyes, especially those of the women, are large and bright, and attest their tropical origin. The women, who wore brilliant handkerchiefs upon their heads, and the fullest of white skirts over such a number of petticoats as gave them all the appearance of indulging in crinoline, were assisting their husbands in their work, laughing with high glee over a haul which

evidently satisfied them, and chattering, sometimes in their own language and sometimes in Dutch. A black-headed progeny scrambled about amongst their busy elders, the girls looking like pretty dolls in their white linen frocks, the boys dressed in short jackets and trousers, none of them seeming to consider themselves too young to do their best in helping to lug off the fish to the market.

On leaving the fish-market, we made our way along one of the streets which lie parallel to each other, and came to the parade, a place bordered with pines. Inside the town the eye of a stranger is less struck by the buildings, which for the most part are in the old Dutch style, than by the traffic which is going on in the streets, where the mixed breeds predominate. In every corner, in every house, they swarm in the capacity of porters, drivers, or servants, and Malays, Kaffirs, and half-breeds are perpetually lying in wait for a job, which, when found, they are skilful enough in turning to their own advantage. Much as was done during my seven years' sojourn in the country to improve the external appearance and general condition of the town, this portion of the population seemed never to gain in refinement, and the sole advance that it appeared to make was in the craftiness and exorbitance of its demands. Exceptions, however, were occasionally to be found amongst some of the Malays and half-breeds, who from special circumstances had had the advantage of a somewhat better education.

Cape Town is the headquarters of the Chief Com-

missioner for the British Possessions and Dependencies in South Africa, as well as for his Council and for the Upper and Lower Houses of Assembly. It is also the see of an Anglican bishop. The town contains sixteen churches and chapels, and amongst its population, which is chiefly coloured, are members of almost every known creed. Amongst the white part of the community, the Dutch element decidedly preponderates.

At the head of the present Government is a man who has gained the highest confidence of the colonists, and who is esteemed as the most liberal-minded and far-seeing governor that England has ever entrusted with the administration of the affairs of her South African possessions. It is confidently maintained that many of Sir Bartle Frere's measures are destined to bear rich fruit in the future.

The public buildings that are most worthy of mention are the Town Hall, the churches, the Government House, the Sailors' Home, the Railway Station, and especially the Museum, with Sir George Grey's Monument, and the adjacent Botanical Gardens; but perhaps the structure that may most attract attention is the stone castle commanding the town, where the Commander-in-chief resides, and which has now been appointed as the temporary abode of the captive Zulu king, Cetewayo.

Whether seen from the sea, or viewed from inland, the environs of Cape Town are equally charming in their aspect. Approached from the shore,

the numerous white specks along the foot of the Lion's Head gradually resolve themselves into villas standing in the midst of luxuriant gardens, sometimes situated on the grassy slopes, and sometimes picturesquely placed upon the summit of a steep bare rock. The well-to-do residents, especially the merchants, are conveyed from this suburb into the town by a horse-tramway, which is in constant use from six in the morning until ten at night. The part lying nearest to the town is called Green Point, the more remote end being known as Sea Point. Between the two are the burial-grounds, the one allotted to Europeans being by no means dissimilar to the quiet cypress gardens in Madeira. The native cemeteries lie a little higher up the hill, and afford an interesting study in ethnography. That of the Mohammedan Malays cannot fail to claim especial attention—the graves marked by dark slate tablets, distinguished by inscriptions, and adorned with perpetual relays of bright paper-flowers.

Charming as is the scene at the foot of the Lion's Head, there is another, still more lovely, on the lower slopes of the Devil's Mountain. Here, for miles, village after village, garden after garden, make one continuous chain, the various farmsteads being separated and overshadowed by tracts of oaks or pines. Every hundred steps an enchanting picture is opened to the eye, especially in places where the mountain exhibits its own interesting geological formation, or forms a background clothed with woods or blossoming heath. The suburb is connected

with the town by the railroad, which runs inland for about a hundred miles.

On this railroad the third station has a peculiar interest as being the one nearest to the Royal Observatory, which is built in some pleasure-grounds near the Salt River. World-wide is the reputation of the Observatory through its association with the labours of Sir John Herschel, astronomical science being at present prosecuted under the superintendence of Professor Gill.

Our two days' sojourn at Cape Town sped quickly by, and the "Briton" left Table Bay. Rounding the Cape of Good Hope, she proceeded towards Algoa Bay, in order to land the majority of her passengers at Port Elizabeth, the second largest town in the colony, and the most important mercantile seaport in South Africa.

Along the precipitous coast the voyage is ever attended with considerable danger, and many vessels have quite recently been lost upon the hidden reefs with which the sea-bottom is covered.

Like the other bays upon the coast, Algoa Bay is wide and open, and consequently much exposed to storms; indeed, with the exception of Lime Bay, a side-arm of Simon's Bay, there is not a single secure harbour throughout the entire south coast of the Cape. This is a most serious disadvantage to trade, export as well as import, not simply from the loss of time involved in conveying goods backwards or forwards from vessels anchored nearly half-a-mile from the shore, but on account of the additional expense

that is necessarily incurred. Large sums of money, undoubtedly, would be required for the formation of harbours in these open roadsteads, yet the outlay might be beneficial to the colony in many ways.

Situated on a rocky declivity some 200 feet high, Port Elizabeth extends over an area about two miles in length, and varying from a quarter of a mile to a full mile in breadth. The population is about 20,000. Any lack of natural beauty in the place has been amply compensated by its having acquired a mercantile importance through rising to be the trade metropolis for the whole interior country south of the Zambesi; it has grown to be the harbour not only for the eastern portion of Cape Colony, the Orange Free State, and the Diamond-fields, but also partially for the Transvaal and beyond.

A small muddy river divides the town into two unequal sections, of which the smaller, which lies to the south, is occupied principally by Malay fishermen. At the end of the main thoroughfare, and at no great distance from Baker River, bounded on the south side by the finest Town Hall in South Africa, lies the market-place; in its centre stands a pyramid of granite, and as it opens immediately from the pier, a visitor, who may have been struck with the monotonous aspect of the town from off the coast, is agreeably surprised to find himself surrounded by handsome edifices and by offices so luxurious that they would be no disgrace to any European capital. Between the market-place and the sea, as far as the mouth of the Baker River,

stand immense warehouses, in which are stored wool ready for export, and all such imported stores as are awaiting conveyance to the interior.

My own first business upon landing was to select an hotel, but it was a business that I could by no means set about with the nonchalance of a well-to-do traveller. For after paying a duty of 1*l.* for my breech-loader, and 10*s.* for my revolver, my stock of ready money amounted to just half-a-sovereign; and even this surplus was due to the accidental circumstance of the case of my gun not having been put on board the "Briton." However, I had my letters of introduction.

A German merchant, Hermann Michaelis, to whom I first betook myself, directed me to Herr Adler, the Austrian Consul, and through the kind exertions of this gentleman in my behalf, Port Elizabeth proved to me a most enjoyable place of residence. He introduced me to the leading gentry of the town, and in a very short time I had the gratification of having several patients placed under my care. I had much leisure, which I spent in making excursions around the neighbourhood, but I had hardly been in Port Elizabeth a fortnight when I received an offer from one of the resident merchants, inviting me to settle down as a physician, with an income of about 600*l.* a year. The proposal was very flattering, and very enticing; it opened the way to set me free from all pecuniary difficulties, but for reasons which will hereafter be alleged, I was unable to accept it.

I generally made my excursions in the morning,

as soon as I had paid my medical visits, returning late in the afternoon. Sometimes I went along the shore to the south, by a long tongue of land partially clothed with dense tropical brushwood, and partially composed of wide tracts of sand, on the extremity of which, seven miles from the town, stands a lighthouse. Sometimes I chose the northern shore, and walked as far as the mouth of the Zwartkop River. Sometimes, again, I spent the day in exploring the valley of the Baker River, which I invariably found full of interest. Furnished with plenty of appliances for collecting, I always found it a delight to get away from the hotel, and escaping from the warehouses, to gain the bridge over the river; but it generally took the best part of half an hour before I could make my way through the bustle of the wool depôt, which monopolizes the 250 yards of sand between the buildings and the sea.

Towards the south, as far as the lighthouse, the coast is one continuous ledge of rock, sloping in a terrace down to the water, and incrustated in places with the work of various marine animals, especially coral polypes. Sandy tracts of greater or less extent are found along the shore itself, but the sand does not extend far out to sea in the way that it does on the north of the town, towards the mouth of the Zwartkop.

All the curiosities that I could fish up at low tide from the coral grottoes, and all the remarkable scraps of coral and sea-weed that were

cast up by the south-easterly storms, I carried home most carefully; and after my return from the interior, I found opportunity to continue my collections over a still larger area, and met with a still larger success.

Accompanied by four or five hired negroes, and by my little black waiting-maid Bella, I worked for hours together on the shore, and brought back rare and precious booty to the town.

The capture of the nautilus afforded us great amusement. We used to poke about the pools in the rocks with an iron-wire hook, and if the cephalopod happened to be there it would relinquish its hold upon the rock to which it had been clinging, and make a wild clutch upon the hook, thus enabling us to drag it out; of course, it would instantly fall off again; if it chanced to tumble upon a dry place, it would contract its tentacles and straightway make off to the sea; but if it lighted on the loose shingle we were generally able, by the help of some good-sized stones, to pick it up and make it a prisoner. The bodies of the largest of these mollusks are about five inches in length, but their expanded tentacles often reach to a measure of two feet. They are much sought after and relished by the Malays, who call them cat-fish.

Occasionally we saw young men and women with hammers collecting oysters, cockles, and limpets, to be sold in the town; and every here and there were groups of white boys with little bags, not

unlike butterfly-nets, catching a sort of prawns, which some of the residents esteem a great delicacy. Diver-birds and gulls abounded near the shallows, the former rising so sluggishly upon the wing, that several of them allowed themselves to be captured by my dog Spot.

The coast, as I have already mentioned, here forms a wide tongue of land, half of which is a bare bank, whilst, with the exception of the extreme point, the other part, near the town and towards the lighthouse, is clothed with luxuriant vegetation. At least a thousand different varieties of plants are to be found in the district, and this is all the more surprising because they have their roots in soil which is mere sand. Fig-marigolds of various kinds are especially prominent; here and there citron-coloured trusses of bloom, as large as the palm of one's hand, stand out in gleaming contrast to the dark finger-like, triangular leaves; a few steps further, and at the foot of a thick shrubbery, appear a second and a third variety, the one with orange-tinted blossoms, the other with red; and while we are stopping to admire these, just a little to the right, below a thicket of rushes, our eye is caught by yet another sort, dark-leaved and with flowers of bright crimson. Another moment, and before we have decided which to gather first, something slippery beneath our feet makes us look down, and we become aware that even another variety, this time having blossoms of pure white, is lurking almost hidden in the grass. In the pursuit of this

diversified and attractive flora, the multiplicity of dwarf shrubs, of rushes, and of euphorbias, stands only too good a chance of being completely overlooked.



EUPHORBIA TREES.

For miles this sandy substratum forms shallow, grassy valleys from 10 to 20 feet deep, and varying from 100 to 900 yards in length, running parallel to each other, and alternating with wooded eminences rising 30 to 50 feet above the sea level.

Westwards from the lighthouse the shore is especially rich in vegetation. Its character is that of a rocky cliff broken by innumerable trickling streams.

Several farmhouses are built upon the upper level. The swampy places are overgrown by many sorts of moisture-loving plants, the open pools being adorned with graceful reeds, and not unfrequently with blossoms of brilliant hue. The slope towards the sea is well-nigh covered by these marshes, whilst the low flattened hills that intervene are carpetted with heaths of various species, some so small as to be scarcely perceptible, others growing in bushes and approaching four feet in height. Truly it is a spot where a botanist may revel to his heart's content. These heaths not only exhibit an endless variety of form in their blossoms, but every tint of colour is to be traced in their delicate petals. The larger sorts are ordinarily white or grey; the smaller most frequently yellow or ochre-coloured; but there are others of all shades, from the faintest pink to the deepest purple.

The heaths that predominate in the southern districts of Cape Colony are characteristic of the South African flora, though they are a type of vegetation that does not extend far inland. The largest number of species is to be found in the immediate neighbourhood of Cape Town and of Port Elizabeth.

Besides the heaths, lilies (particularly the scarlet and crimson sorts) are to be found in bloom at nearly all seasons of the year. Gladioli, also, of the bright red kind, are not unfrequently to be met with, vividly recalling the red flowering aloe which grows upon the Zuurbergen. Mosses are to be found in abundance on the downs.

A stranger wandering through this paradise of flowers would be tempted to imagine that, with the exception of a few insects and song-birds, animal life was entirely wanting. Such, however, was far from being the case. Lurking in the low, impenetrable bushes are tiny gazelles, not two feet high, hares, jerboas, wild cats, genets, and many other animals that only wait for the approach of nightfall to issue from their hiding-places.

My excursions to the shore, along the tongue of land, were upon the whole, highly successful. During my visit I collected a large variety of fish, crabs, cephalopods, annelids, aphrodites, many genera of mollusks, corals, sponges, and sea-weeds, as well as several specimens of the eggs of the dog-fish.

Nor did I confine myself to exploring the south shore. I wandered occasionally in the opposite direction, towards the mouth of the Zwartkop. There the shore for the most part consists of sand, which extends far out to sea, making it a favourable stranding-place for any vessel that has been torn from its anchorage during one of the frequent storms. From the sea I procured many interesting mollusks. Dog-fish abound near the mouth of the stream, while the river itself seems to teem with many kinds of fish. The banks, more especially that on the left, are rich in fossils of the chalk period, and in the alluvial soil are remains of still extant shell-fish, as well as interesting screw-shaped formations of gypsum. The coast is flatter here than it is towards the south, and the large lagoons that stretch inland

furnish a fine field for the ornithologist's enjoyment, as they abound in plovers, sandpipers, and other birds. I observed, also, several species of flowers that were new to me, particularly some aloes, mari-golds, and ranunculuses, and a fleshy kind of convolulus, which, I think, has not been seen elsewhere.

Generally I returned home by way of the salt-pan, a small salt lake about 500 yards long by 200 broad, which lies between the town and the river, and is for part of the year full of water. Here I found some more new flowers, besides some beetles and butterflies. The salt-pan lies in a grassy plain, bounded on the west by the slope on which the town is built. Both the plain and the rocky declivity produce a variety of plants, but the majority of them are of quite a dwarf growth; in August and September, the spring months, they abound in lizards, spiders, and scorpions, and of these I secured a large collection. On the slope alone I caught as many as thirty-four snakes. Just at this season, when the winter is departing, the beetles and reptiles begin to emerge from their holes; but, finding the nights and mornings still cold, they are driven by their instinct to take refuge under large stones. Here they will continue sometimes for a week or more in a state of semi-vitality; and, captured in this condition, they may easily be transferred to a bottle of spirits of wine without injury to the specimens.

My inland excursions, which for the most part took the direction of the valley of Baker River, had

likewise their own special charm. In its lower course the river-bed is bounded by steep and rocky walls, rising in huge, towering blocks; but higher up there are tracts of pasturage, where the tall grass is enlivened by a sprinkling of gay blossoms, that indicate the close proximity of the sea. Scattered over the valley are farms and homesteads, and in every spot where there is any moisture a luxuriant growth of tropical shrubs, ferns, and creepers is sure to reveal itself, and in especial abundance upon the ruins of deserted dwellings.

In one of the recesses of the valley there is an establishment for washing wool by steam. At a very short distance from this I found a couple of vipers rolled up under a stone, in a hole that had probably been made by some great spider. I seized one of them with a pair of pincers, and transferred it with all speed to my flask, which already contained a heterogeneous collection of insects and reptiles. I had caught the male first, and succeeded in catching the female before she had time to realize that her mate was gone. I kept them both in my flask with its neck closed for a time, sufficiently long, as I supposed, to stupefy them thoroughly, and went on my way. Finding other specimens I opened my receptacle and deposited them there, but it did not occur to me that there was any further need to keep the flask shut. I had not gone far before I was conscious of a strange thrill passing over my hand; a glance was sufficient to show me what had happened; one of my captive vipers had made an escape, and

was fastening itself upon me ; involuntarily I let the flask, contents and all, fall to the ground. I was not disposed, however, to be baulked of my prize, and immediately regaining my presence of mind, I managed once again to secure the fugitive, and was careful this time to fasten it in its imprisonment more effectually.

One day, Herr Michaelis invited me to accompany him and another friend to the high table-land on a bee-hunt. It was an excursion that would occupy about half a day, and I was most delighted to avail myself of the offer. We started up the hill in a covered, two-wheeled vehicle, and turned eastward across the plain that extends in a north-easterly direction. The plateau was clothed with short grass, and studded with thousands of reddish-brown ant-hills, chiefly conical in form and measuring about three feet in diameter, and something under three feet in height. Those that were still occupied had their surface smooth, the deserted ones appearing rough and perforated. An ant-hill is always forsaken when its queen dies, and our search was directed towards any that we could find thus abandoned, in the hope of securing its supply of honey. In the interior of Africa a honey-bird is used as a guide to the wild bees' nests ; but in our case, we employed a half-naked Fingo, wearing a red woollen cap, who ran by the side of our carriage, and kept a sharp look-out. It was not long before a gesture from him brought us to a stand-still. He had made his discovery ; he had seen bees flying in and

out of a hill, and now was our chance. We lost no time in fastening up our conveyance, lighted a fire as rapidly as we could, and in a very few minutes the bees were all suffocated in the smoke. The ant-hill itself was next cleared away, and in the lower cells were found several combs, lying parallel to each other, and filled partly with fragrant honey, and partly with the young larvæ. I could not resist making a sketch of the structure. The removal of the earth brought to light two more snakes, which were added to my rapidly increasing collection.

With these and similar excursions, four weeks at Port Elizabeth passed pleasantly away. The time came when I must prepare to start for the interior. Tempting as was the offer that had been made to me to remain where I was, there were yet stronger inducements for me to proceed. Not only had a merchant in Fauresmith, in the Orange Free State, held out hopes of my securing a still more lucrative practice, but Fauresmith itself was more than sixty miles further to the north, and thus of immense advantage as a residence for one who, like myself, was eager to obtain all possible information about the interior of the country.

Besides advancing me the expenses of my journey, Herr Hermann Michaelis himself offered to accompany me to Fauresmith.

I need hardly say with how much regret I left Port Elizabeth, and all the friends who, during my visit, had treated me with such courtesy and consideration.

CHAPTER II.

JOURNEY TO THE DIAMOND-FIELDS.

IT was in the beginning of August that I started on my journey from Port Elizabeth to Fauresmith, *viâ* Grahamstown, Cradock, Colesberg, and Philipopolis. My vehicle was a two-wheeled cart, drawn by four small horses, and the distance of eighty-six miles to Grahamstown was accomplished in eleven hours.

The beauty of the scenery and of the vegetation made the drive very attractive. The railway that now runs to Grahamstown also passes through charming country; but, on the whole, I give my preference to the district which was originally traversed by road. For the greater part of the way the route lies beneath the brow of the Zuur Mountains, which, with their wooded clefts and valleys, and their pools enclosed by sloping pastures, must afford unfailing interest both to the artist and to the lover of nature.

Occasionally the trees stand in dense clumps, quite detached, a form of vegetation which is very characteristic of wide districts in the interior of the

continent; but by far the larger portion of this region is covered by an impenetrable bush-forest, consisting partly of shrubby undergrowth, and partly of dwarf trees. Many of these appear to be of immense age, but many others seem to have been attacked by insects, and have so become liable to premature decay.

Every now and then our road led past slopes, where the stems of the trees were covered all over with lichen, which gave them a most peculiar aspect, and it was a pleasant reminiscence of the woods of the north to see a beard-lichen (*Usnea*) with its thick grey-green tufts a foot long decorating the forked boughs as with a drapery of hoar-frost. In other places, the eye rested on declivities covered for miles with dwarf bushes, of which the most striking were the various species of red-flowering aloes, and the different euphorbias, some large as trees, some low, like shrubs, and others mere weeds, but altogether affording a spectacle at which the heart of a botanist could not but rejoice.

Numerous varieties, too, of solanum (nightshade) laden with yellow, white, blue, or violet blossoms, climb in and around the trees, and in some parts unite the stems with wreaths that intertwine so as to form almost an impenetrable thicket, where the grasses, the bindweeds, the heaths, and the ranunculuses in the very multiplicity of their form and colour fill the beholder with surprise and admiration. Like a kaleidoscope, the vegetation changes with every variation of scenery; and each bare or grassy

flat, each grove or tract of bushwood, each swamp or pool, each slope or plain has ever its own rare examples of *liliaceæ*, *papilionaceæ*, and *mimosæ* to exhibit.

Here and there, in the midst of its own few acres of cultivated land, is to be seen a farm, and at no unfrequent intervals by the wayside are erections of brick or galvanized iron, which, although often consisting of only a couple of rooms and a store, are nevertheless distinguished by the name of hotels.

Throughout this district the fauna is as varied as the flora, and the species of animals are far more numerous and diversified than in the whole of the next ten degrees further north towards the interior. As I had opportunity in my three subsequent journeys to examine the different animal groups in detail, I shall merely refer here to their names, deferring more minute description for a future page. Ground squirrels and small rodents abound upon the bare levels where there is no grass, associating together in common burrows, which have about twenty holes for ingress and egress, large enough to admit a man's fist. In places where there is much long grass are found the retreats of moles, jackals, African polecats, jerboas, porcupines, earth-pigs, and short-tailed armadilloes. In the fens there are otters, rats, and a kind of weasel. On the slopes are numerous herds of baboons, black-spotted genets, caracals, jumping mice, a peculiar kind of rabbit, and the rooyebock gazelle; and besides the

edentata already mentioned, duykerbock and steinbock gazelles are met with in those districts where the trees are in detached clumps. The tracts of low bushwood, often very extensive, afford shelter to the striped and spotted hyæna, as well as to the strand-wolf (*Hyæna brunnea*); and there, too, amongst many other rodentia is found a gigantic field-mouse; also two other gazelles, one of them being the lovely little bushbock. The bushes on the slopes and the underwood are the resort of baboons, monkeys, grey wild-cats, foxes, leopards, koodoo-antelopes, bushvarks, blackvarks, buffaloes, and elephants, the elephants being the largest of the three African varieties. A hyrax that is peculiar to the locality, and lives in the trees, ought not to be omitted from the catalogue.

Leopards are more dangerous here than in the uninhabited regions of the interior, where they are less accustomed to the sound of fire-arms, and so desperate do they become when wounded, that it is generally deemed more prudent to destroy them by poison or in traps.

The capture of elephants is forbidden by law; consequently several wild herds, numbering twenty or thirty head, still exist in Cape Colony; whilst in the Transvaal, the Orange Free State, and the Bechuana country the race has been totally annihilated.

Their immunity from pursuit gives them an overweening assurance that is in striking contrast with the behaviour of the animals of their kind in Central and Northern South Africa. There a shot, even if

two or three miles away, is enough to put a herd to speedy flight, and they seldom pause, until they have placed the best part of twenty miles between themselves and the cause of their alarm; and although within the last twenty years 7500 elephants have been killed by Europeans, it is the very rarest occurrence for one of them to make an unprovoked attack upon a human being. Here, on the contrary, between Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown, it is necessary to be on one's guard against meeting one of the brutes. Just before I returned to Port Elizabeth on my homeward journey, a sad accident had happened in the underwood by the Zondags River, which flows partially through the forest. A black servant had been sent by his master to look for some cattle that had strayed; as the man did not return, a search was made for him, but nothing was found except his mangled corpse. From the marks all around, it was quite evident that a herd of passing elephants had scented him out, and diverging from their path, had trampled the poor fellow to death. It should be mentioned, that although ordinarily living under protection, these ponderous creatures may be slain by consent of the Government.

To enumerate all the varieties of birds to be seen hereabouts would be impossible; an ornithologist might consume months before he could exhaust the material for his collection; I will only say that a sportsman may, day after day, easily fill more than his own bag with different kinds of bustards, guinea-fowl, partridges, sand-grouse, snipes and plovers,



ELEPHANTS ON THE ZONDAGS RIVER.

wild ducks and wild geese, divers and other water-fowl. The wonderful and beautiful productions of the vegetable kingdom that excite the admiration of the stranger as he makes his excursions in this district, whether in pursuit of pleasure or of science, derive a double charm from the numerous graceful birds and sparkling insects that hover and flit about them. Here are long-tailed *Nectariniæ* or sun-birds, now darting for food into the cup-shaped blossoms of the iris, and now alighting upon the crimson flower-spike of the aloe; and there, though not the faintest breath of air is stirring, the branches of a little shrub are all in agitation; amidst the gleaming dark-green foliage, a flock of tiny green and yellow songsters, not unlike our golden-crested wren, are all feasting busily upon the insects that lie hidden beneath the leaves.

On the tops of the waggon-trees, hawks and shrikes, beautiful in plumage, keep their sharp lookout, each bird presiding over its own domain; and no sooner does a mouse, a blindworm, or a beetle expose itself to view, than the bird pounces down upon its prey; its movement so sudden, that the bough on which it sat rebounds again as though rejoicing in its freedom from its burden.

The leafy mimosas, too, covered with insects of many hues, attract a large number of birds. Nor are the reedy districts at all deficient in their representatives of the feathered race, but reed-warblers, red and yellow finches, and weaver-birds keep the

lank rushes in perpetual motion, and make the valleys resound with their twittering notes.

As representatives of the reptile world, gigantic lizards are to be found near every running water; tortoises of many kinds abound on land, one sort being also met with both in streams and in stagnant pools; there are a good many poisonous snakes, such as buff-adders, cobras, horned vipers, besides coral snakes; likewise a species of green water-snake, which, however, is harmless. Venomous marine serpents also find their way up the rivers from the sea.

We reached Grahamstown late at night on the same day that we left Port Elizabeth, and started off again early the following morning. During the next two days we had some pleasant travelling in a comfortable American *calèche*, and arrived at Cradock, a distance of 125 miles. At first the country was full of woods and defiles similar to those we had passed after leaving Port Elizabeth, but afterwards it changed to a high table-land marked by numerous detached hills, some flat and some pointed, and bounded on the extreme north-east and north-west by mountain chains and ridges. The isolated hills rise from 200 to 500 feet above the surrounding plain, and are mostly covered with low bushes, consisting chiefly of the soil-exhausting lard-tree. The valleys display a great profusion of acacias, hedge-thorns and other kinds of mimosa, but the general type of vegetation which is conspicuous hereabouts disappears beyond Cradock, and is not seen again in

any distinctness until near the Vaal River, or even farther north.

On our way to Cradock I had my first sight of those vast plains that stretch as far as the eye can reach, and which during the rainy season present an illimitable surface of dark green or light, according as they are covered with bush or grass, but which, throughout all the dry period of the year, are merely an expanse of dull red desert. They abound in the west of Cape Colony, in the Free State, in the Transvaal, and in the Batlapin countries, and are the habitations of the lesser bustard, the springbock, the blessbock, and the black gnu. Where they are not much hunted all these animals literally swarm; but on my route I saw only the springbock, which is found in diminished numbers on the plains to the north. I did not observe one at all beyond the Salt Lake basin in Central South Africa; along the west coast, however, as far as the Portuguese settlements, they are very abundant.

The springbock (*Antilope Eudore*) is undeniably one of the handsomest of the whole antelope tribe. Besides all the ordinary characteristics of its genus, it possesses a remarkable strength and elasticity of muscle; and its shapely head is adorned with so fine a pair of lyrate horns that it must rank *facile princeps* amongst the medium-sized species of its kind. The gracefulness of its movements when it is at play, or when startled into flight, is not adequately to be described, and it might almost seem as if the agile creature were seeking to divert the evil pur-

poses of a pursuer by the very coquetry of its antics. Unfortunately, however, sportsmen are proof against any charms of this sort; and under the ruthless hands of the Dutch farmers, and the unsparing attacks of the natives, it is an animal that is every day becoming more and more rare.

The bounds of the springbock may, perhaps, be best compared to the jerks of a machine set in motion by watch-spring. It will allow any dog except a greyhound to approach it within quite a moderate distance; it will gaze, as if entirely unconcerned, while the dog yelps and howls, apparently waiting for the scene to come to an end, when all at once it will spring with a spasmodic leap into the air, and, alighting for a moment on the ground six feet away, will leap up again, repeating the movement like an indiarubber ball bounding and rebounding from the earth. Coming to a stand-still, it will wait awhile for the dog to come close again; but ere long it recommences its springing bounds, and extricates itself once more from the presence of danger. And so, in alternate periods of repose and activity, the chase goes on, till the antelope, wearied out as it were by the sport, makes off completely, and becomes a mere speck on the distant plain.

But the agility of the nimble creature cannot save it from destruction. Since the discovery of the diamond-fields thousands of them, as well as of the allied species, the blessbock and the black gnu, have been slain. The Dutch farmers, who are owners of the districts where the antelopes abound,



are excellent shots and their worst enemies. On their periodical visits to the diamond-fields they always carry with them a rich spoil; and whilst I was there, in the winter months, from May to September, I saw whole waggon-loads of gazelles brought to the market. Nevertheless, in spite of the slaughter, it is a kind of game that as yet has by no means become scarce, and it is sold in the daily markets at Kimberley and Dutoitspan at prices varying from three to seven shillings a head.

Springbock hunting is rather interesting, and is generally done on horseback. The horses, which have been reared on these grassy plains, are well accustomed to the burrow-holes and ant-hills with which they abound, so that they give their rider no concern, and allow him to concentrate all his attention upon his sport. A gallop of about two miles will usually bring the huntsman within a distance of 200 yards of a herd of flying antelopes. A slight pressure of the knees suffices to bring the horse to a standstill, when its rider dismounts and takes a deliberate aim at the victim. Amongst the Dutch Boers the most wonderful feats of skill are performed in this way; and I have known an expert marksman bring down two running antelopes by a single shot from his breech-loader. Other instances I have witnessed, when, both shots having missed, or the second having been fired too late, the herd has scampered off to a distance of 700 yards or more and come to a stand, when a good shot has made a selection of a special victim for his unerring

aim. Well do I recollect one of these experts pointing to a particular antelope in one of these fugitive herds, and exclaiming, "Det rechte kantsche bock, Mynheer!" He brought the creature down as he spoke.

There is another method of hunting these springbucks, by digging holes two or three feet deep and three feet wide, in proximity to ponds or pools in half-dried-up river-beds; in these holes the hunter crouches out of sight, and shoots down the animals as they come to drink. This kind of chase, or rather *battue*, is very common in the dry season, when there are not many places in which the antelopes can quench their thirst, and is especially popular with the most southerly of the Bechuanas, the Batlapins, and the Baralongs, who are, as a rule, by no means skilful as shots.

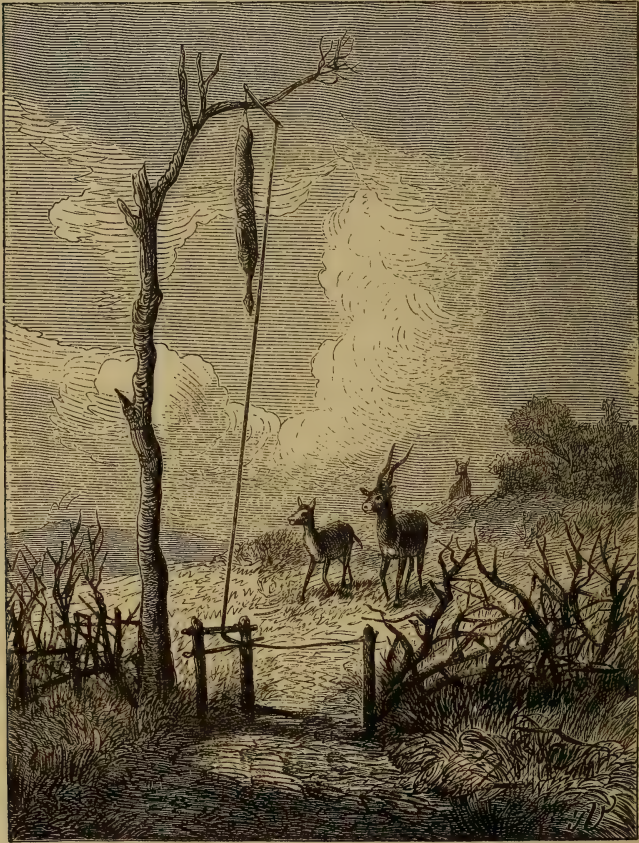
On the plains between the Harts River and the Molapo a different plan is often followed. Several men lie down flat on the ground, either behind ant-hills or in some long grass at intervals of from 50 to 200 yards, and at a considerable distance—ordinarily about half a mile—from the herd. A large number of men then form themselves into a sort of semicircle, and, having encompassed the herd, begin to close in so as to drive them within range of the guns of the men who are lying in ambush. As the weapons are only of the commonest kind, often little better than blunderbusses, the success of the movement of course depends entirely on the first shot. When the party is small,

they not unfrequently spend a whole day waiting most patiently for the springbocks to be driven sufficiently within range. I have myself on one occasion seen a party of six of these skirmishers, after watching with the sublimest patience for many hours, take their aim at an animal that had been driven within the desired limits; the old muskets went off with a roar that made the very ground tremble; the volume of smoke was immense; six dusky faces of the Bechuanas rose from the grass; every eye was full of expectation; but as the cloud rolled off, it revealed the springbock bounding away merrily in the distance. The six shots had all missed.

I feel bound, however, to confess to a performance of my own, about equally brilliant. After watching one day for several hours, I observed a few springbocks scarcely more than twenty yards away from me. I felt quite ashamed at the thought of doing any injury to the creatures, they were so graceful, but we were really in want of food, and it was only the remembrance of this that made me overcome my scruples. I could not help regarding myself almost as a murderer; but if I wanted to secure our dinner, there was no time to lose. My trembling hand touched the trigger; the mere movement startled the springbocks, and before I could prepare myself to fire, they were far away, totally uninjured.

The snare called the hopo-trap, described by Livingstone in his account of gazelle-hunting

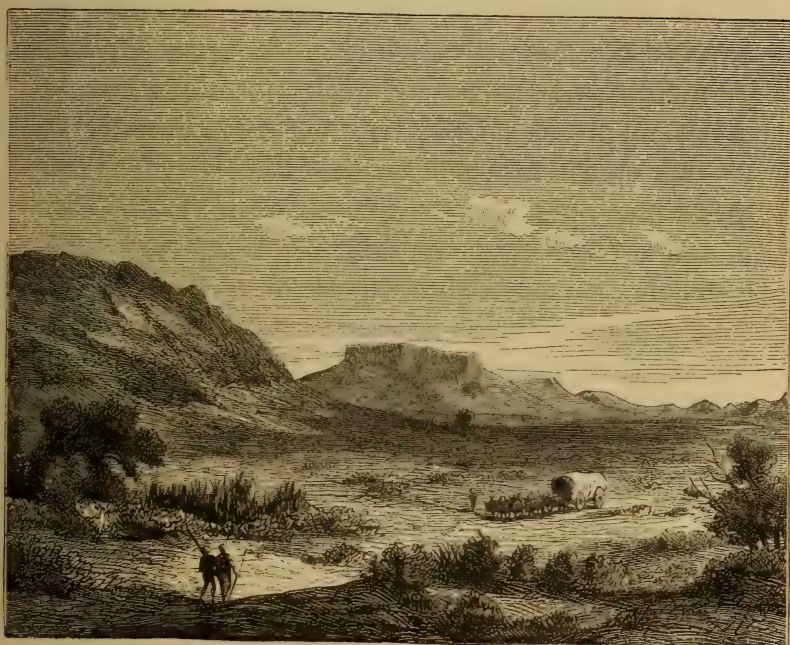
amongst the Bechuanas, I never saw anywhere in use. It would probably be now of no avail, as the game is much wilder and less abundant than it was in his time.



ANTELOPE TRAP.

A still different mode of chasing springbucks has been introduced by the English, who hunt with greyhounds, not using fire-arms at all. Mounted on

horses, that in spite of being unaccustomed to the ground, do their work admirably, the pursuers follow on until the gazelles are fairly brought down by the dogs ; although it not unfrequently happens that the dogs get so weary and exhausted by the run, that the chase has to be abandoned.



THE COUNTRY NEAR CRADOCK.

We only remained in Cradock one day. The town is situated on the left bank of Fish River, a stream often dried up for months together, so as to become merely a number of detached pools ; but a few hours of heavy rain suffice to overflow the

channel with angry waters, that carry ruin and destruction far and wide. The great bridge that spanned the river at the town was in 1874 swept right away by the violence of the flood, the solid ironwork being washed off the piles, which were themselves upheaved. The new bridge was erected at a securer altitude, being about six feet higher.

On the second day after leaving Cradock we reached the town of Colesberg. Our travelling was so rapid that I had scarcely time properly to take in the character of the scenery; but seven years later, on my return in a bullock-waggon, and when progress was especially slow on account of the drought, I had a fairer opportunity of examining, at least partially, the geological structure of the district, and of gaining some interesting information about the adjoining country.

Towards Colesberg the isolated, flattened eminences gradually decrease both in number and in magnitude, the country becoming a high table-land. One of the prettiest parts is Newport, a pass in which is seen the watershed between the southerly-flowing streams, and the affluents of the Orange River. The heights in the district are haunted by herds of baboons, by several of the smaller kinds of antelopes, and by some of the lesser beasts of prey of the cat kind, principally leopards. On the tableland itself are to be counted upwards of fifty quaggas, belonging to the true species, the only one I believe to be met with in South Africa. I was delighted to find that latterly they had been spared by the

farmers ; ten years previously their number had been diminished to a total of about fifteen heads.

The town is distinguished by a hill, which has the same name as itself, and which exhibits the stratification of the various rocks of which the district is composed. Colesberg itself is somewhat smaller than Cradock, and is situated in a confined rocky vale. The contiguous heights are for the most part covered with grass and bushwood, of so low a growth that from a distance they have the appearance of being almost destitute of vegetation. In summertime the radiation of heat from the rocks is so intense that the town becomes like an oven, and is by no means a pleasant place of residence.

Proceeding northwards, a journey of a couple of hours brought us to the Orange River, the boundary between the Orange Free State and Cape Colony. Two hours later we reached Philipopolis. The aspect of this place was most melancholy. The winter drought had parched up all the grass, alike in the valley and on the surrounding hills, leaving the environs everywhere brown and bare. Equally dreary-looking were the square flat-roofed houses, about sixty in number, and nearly all quite unenclosed, that constituted the town ; whilst the faded foliage of a few trees near some stagnant pools in the channel of a dried-up brook, did nothing to enliven the depressing scene. The majority of the houses being unoccupied, scarcely a living being was to be seen, so that the barrenness of the spot was only equalled by its stillness.

Hence, for the rest of the way to Fauresmith, we had to travel in a mail-cart, a two-wheeled vehicle of most primitive construction. A drive of three hours in such a conveyance over the best paved highway, and in the most genial weather, could hardly have been a matter of any enjoyment ; but in



ON THE WAY TO THE DIAMOND-FIELDS.

the teeth of a piercing cold wind, and along a road covered with huge blocks of stone, and intersected by the deep ruts made by the streams from the highlands, and over which, in order to exhibit the mettle of his horses, our driver persisted in dashing at a break-neck pace, the journey was little

better than martyrdom. The seat on which three of us had to balance ourselves was scarcely a yard long and half a yard wide, and in our efforts to preserve the equilibrium of ourselves and our luggage, our hands became perfectly benumbed with cold ; and, to crown our discomfort, snow, which is of rare occurrence in these regions, began to fall.

We held out till man and beast were well-nigh exhausted, and had accomplished about three-quarters of the distance, when the barking of a dog, the sure symptom of the proximity of a dwelling-house, fell like music on our ears. The most miserable of Kaffir huts would have been a welcome sight ; my friend declared himself ready to give a sovereign for a night's lodging in a dog-kennel ; but we were agreeably surprised at finding ourselves arrive at a comfortable-looking farmhouse, where the lights seemed to beam forth a welcome from the windows. We were most hospitably received, and sitting round the farmer's bountiful board, soon forgot the troubles of the way.

After the meal was over we went to the door to ascertain the state of the weather. The snow had ceased almost before our horses were unharnessed, and, except in the south-east, the direction of the departing storm, the sky was comparatively clear, and there was a faint glimmer of moonlight. As I stood listening, I caught again the screeching note of a bird which already I had heard while sitting at the table. My host informed me that it proceeded

from "det grote springhan vogl," and I thought I should like to take my chance at a shot. The bird was really the South African grey crane, to which the residents have given the name of "the great locust bird," on account of the great service it performs in the destruction of locusts. It is so designated in distinction to the small locust bird, which migrates with the locust-swarms. The great cranes (*C. Stanleyi*) never leave their accustomed quarters.

In the prosecution of my design I crept slowly along, but very soon became aware that the birds were not wanting in vigilance. The first rustle made the whole flock screech aloud and mount into the air. I did not want to fire promiscuously among them all, and so abandoned my purpose, and came back again. I afterwards observed that these cranes, together with the crowned cranes (*Balearia regulorum*), and the herons, as well as several kinds of storks, are accustomed to pass the night in stagnant waters in order that they may rest secure from the attacks of hyænas, jackals, foxes, hyæna-dogs (*Canis pictus*), and any animals of the cat tribe. As soon as darkness sets in the birds may be observed standing in long rows right in the midst of the pools, and until the break of day they never quit their place of refuge. But not even the security of their position seems to throw them off their guard. I observed during my many hunting excursions, both in the neighbourhood of the salt-water and of the fresh-water lakes, that a certain number of sentinel

birds were always kept upon the watch, and that at intervals of about half an hour there was a short chatter, as if the sentries were relieving guard. A similar habit has been noticed both amongst the black storks in the Transvaal, and amongst the various herons in the Molapo river, and in the valleys of the Limpopo and the Zambesi.

The time came only too soon for us to leave our hospitable quarters. We set out afresh, and after a miserable jolt of several hours' duration, we reached our destination at Fauresmith.

In its general aspect, Fauresmith is very like the other towns in the Free State. Although consisting of not more than eighty houses, it nevertheless covered a considerable area, and the clean white-washed residences, flat-roofed as elsewhere, peeping out from the gardens, looked altogether pleasant enough. The town is the residence of a kind of high sheriff, and must certainly be ranked as one of the most considerable in the republic. The district of the same name, of which it is the only town, is undoubtedly the wealthiest in the Free State, and deserves special notice, both on account of its horse-breeding and of its diamond-field at Jagersfontein.

Like various other towns in South Africa, Fauresmith is enlivened four times a year by a concourse of Dutch farmers, who meet together for the combined purpose of celebrating their religious rites and making their periodical purchases. At these times the town presents a marked contrast to its

normal condition of silence and stagnation; large numbers of the cumbrous South African waggons make their way through the streets, and form a sort of encampment, partially within and partially on the outskirts of the place, the farmers' sons and the contingent of black servants following in the train. Many of the wealthier farmers have houses of their own in the town, sometimes (where water is to be readily procured) adorned with gardens; but such as have inferior means content themselves with a hired room or two, whilst the poorest make shift for the time with the accommodation afforded by their own waggons. These recurring visits of the farmers are regarded as important events by the townspeople, and are looked for with much interest; in many respects they are like the fairs held in European cities. Especially are they busy seasons to the medical men, as, except for urgent cases, all consultations are reserved for these occasions and the majority of ordinary ailments that befall the rural population abide these opportunities to be submitted to advice.

Here in Fauresmith, just as in similar places with limited population, the sheriff, the minister, the merchant, the notary, and the doctor, form the cream of the society.

Nothing could exceed the hopefulness of the temper in which I had started for this town. Not only had I satisfied myself that I should be so much farther inland than I was at Port Elizabeth, and consequently that my advantages would be great in

ascertaining what outfit would be really requisite for my progress into the interior, but I had been sanguine enough to anticipate that I should be in a position to earn the means that would enable me to carry out my design. So favourably had the prospect been represented to me, that I had accepted the proposition of the Fauresmith merchant in all confidence; perhaps my helplessness and complete want of resources had made me too trusting; I was, perchance, the drowning man catching at a straw.

A very few days of actual experience were enough to dispel any bright anticipation in which I had indulged. I could not conceal from myself that I was a burden upon the very man who had offered to befriend me, and induced me to come; his good offices in my behalf necessarily placed him in a false position with an older friend, a physician already resident in the town, and to whom he was now introducing a rival; it was only to be expected that his long-established friendship with him should prevail over his recent goodwill towards myself; he saw his mistake, and soon took an opportunity of telling me that if I proceeded to the diamond-fields I should find myself the right man in the right place.

I took the counsel into my best consideration, and quickly came to the conclusion that nothing else was to be done. Accordingly, I made arrangements to start.

But my difficulties were great. I had hardly

any clothes to my back, my boots were in holes, and I had no money to replace either. I had no alternative but to get what I required upon credit. I succeeded in this, and set out forthwith, my pride not permitting me to remind my Port Elizabeth friend of the kind offer of assistance which he had made me.

Herr Michaelis once again rendered me the kindest of service; after advancing me money to forward me on my way, he undertook to convey me as his guest to the diamond-fields, which he had himself made up his mind to visit. We were joined by a third traveller, Herr Rabinsvitz, the chief rabbi for South Africa, from whom I received marked courtesy and consideration.

Although for the time I was disappointed, I could not feel otherwise than grateful for the hospitality shown me during my short residence in Fauresmith, by the worthy merchant. I acknowledge my obligation to him by this record, and rejoice to remember how I quitted the place with no ill-will for the past, but with the fullest confidence for the future.

Very monotonous in its character is the district between Fauresmith and the diamond-fields, the only scenery at all attractive being alongside the Riet River and in the valley of the Modder, which we had to cross. At this spot there seemed to be a chance of getting some sport, and I employed the few minutes during a halt after dinner in exploring the locality. The Riet River, like a fine thread, flowed north-westwards in a deep clear channel to

its junction with the Modder, and, as is the case with most of the South African streams in the dry winter season, there were large pools, nine or ten feet deep and full of fish, extending right across the river-bed.

The whole valley is thickly covered with weeping willows (*Salix Babylonica*), and amongst these I found some very interesting birds. Pushing my way through the brushwood, with the design of making a closer inspection of one of the pools, I was startled by a great rustling, and by a chorus of notes just over my head. I stepped back, and a whole flock of birds rose into the air and settled in a thorn at no great distance. They were the pretty long-tailed *Colius leucotis*. I afterwards saw two other varieties of the same species. One of the flock that I had disturbed perched itself upon a bough almost close at hand, as if resolved to make a deliberate survey of the strangers who had intruded on its retirement, but all the rest had taken refuge in the bush, and were completely hidden from my view. They are lively little creatures, but very difficult to keep in confinement; the only caged specimens I ever saw were in Grahamstown, in the possession of a bird-fancier, who kept them with several kinds of finches, and fed them with oranges.

The most common birds in the Riet River valley are doves, and those almost exclusively of two sorts, the South African blue-grey turtle-dove, and the laughing-dove; of these the latter is found even beyond the Zambesi; it is a most attractive little

creature, that cannot fail to win the affection of every lover of birds. I had a couple of them, which I had succeeded in catching after slightly wounding them. I kept them for years, and they afforded me much amusement. As early as three o'clock in the morning the male was accustomed to greet his brooding mate with his silvery laughing coo, and she would reply in low and tender notes that were soft and melodious as distant music. I eventually lost them through the negligence of one of my black servants.

On the plains on either side of the river I found the white-eared bustard, the commonest kind of wild-fowl in all South Africa; its cry, from the first day of my journey through the Orange Free State and the Transvaal to the last, rarely ceased to be heard. It affords a good meal, and may easily be brought down by the most inexperienced marksman. As soon as it becomes aware of the approach of a pursuer, it turns its head with an inquiring look in all directions, and suddenly dives down; just as suddenly it rises again, shrieking harshly, and after an awkward flight of about a couple of hundred yards, sinks slowly to the earth with drooping wings and down-stretched legs. Its upper plumage is of a mixed brown; its head, with the exception of a white streak across the cheeks, is black, as are also the throat and chest; its legs are yellow. Its habitat does not extend beyond the more northerly and wooded districts of South Africa, and, like other birds to which I have referred, it is extremely difficult to keep in confinement.

Our road through the valley led us past Coffee-fontein, the second diamond-field in the Free State, where the brilliants, though small, are of a fine white quality. Late in the evening we crossed the river by the ford, spending the night in an hotel on the opposite bank.

It is just as well for me to disabuse the reader's mind of any idea he might form, that the



HOTEL ON THE RIET RIVER.

building designated by the name of an hotel had any pretensions answering to the title it claimed. A couple of wooden huts, covered with canvas, and serving alike for dwelling-rooms and business-offices,

with a few sheepskins and goatskins laid upon the ground for sleeping accommodation, may be said to be a fair representation of the average arrangements, external and internal, of such establishments. A violent draught penetrating every cranny kept some tattered curtains—so old, that it was impossible to say what their original texture had been—in continual motion; and so intense was the cold, that I was sorely tempted to drag down the ragged drapery, stop its fluttering, and wrap it round me for a covering.

In such quarters, anything like refreshing sleep was not to be expected, and we were glad enough next morning, after an untempting breakfast, to turn our backs upon the place. In the afternoon we arrived at Jacobsdal, another comfortless looking place, consisting of about five-and-twenty houses, scattered over a scorched-up plain. A long drive on the following morning was to bring us to the central diamond-fields. The nearer we approached, the more dreary did the landscape become; the bushes dwindled gradually, and finally disappeared, so that a few patches of dry grass were alone left as the representatives of vegetation.

The first day on which I set my eyes upon the diamond-fields, I must confess, will ever be engraven on my memory. As our vehicle, drawn by four horses, made its rapid descent from the heights near Scholze's Farm, and when my companion, pointing me to the bare plains just ahead, told me that there lay my future home, my heart sank within

me. A dull, dense fog was all I could distinguish. A bitter wind rushing from the hills, and howling around us in the exposure of our open waggon, seemed to mock at the protection of our outside coats, and resolved to make us know how ungenial the temperature of winter in South Africa could be; and the grey clouds that obscured the sky shadowed the entire landscape with an aspect of the deepest melancholy.

Yes; here I was approaching the Eldorado of the thousands of all nations, attracted hither by the hope of rich reward; but the nearer I came, the more my spirit failed me, and I was conscious of a sickening depression.

Immediate contact with the fog that had been observed from the distant heights, at once revealed its true origin and character. It proved to be dense clouds of dust, first raised by the west wind from the orange-coloured sand on the plains, and then mingled with the loose particles of calciferous earth piled up in heaps amidst the huts on the diggings. So completely did it fill the atmosphere, that it could require little stretch of imagination to fancy that it was a sandstorm of the Sahara. As we entered the encampment the blinding mist was so thick that we could only see a few yards before us; we were obliged to proceed very cautiously; and before we reached the office of my friend the Fauresmith merchant, another mile or so farther on, our faces and our clothes were literally encrusted. We only shared the fate of all new-comers, in feeling

much distressed and really ill; the very horses snorted and sneezed, and showed that the condition of things was no less painful to them than to their masters.

Both at Bultfontein and Dutoitspan these accumulations of the commingled ferruginous and calciferous sand fill the atmosphere to a height of a hundred feet, and involve everything in dim obscurity. Here and there, on both sides, right and left, wherever the gloom would permit me to see, I noticed round and oblong tents, and huts intended for shops, but now closed, built of corrugated iron. Under the fury of the wind, the tent-poles bent, and the ropes were subject to so great a strain that the erections threatened every moment to collapse. Many and many a sheet of the galvanized iron got loose from the roofs or sides of the huts, and creaking in melancholy discord, contributed, as it were, to the gloominess of the surroundings. In many places, too, the pegs that had fastened the tents to the ground had yielded to the pressure, and sheets of canvas were flapping in the air like flags of distress; whilst the only indication of human life was a few dim figures in the background, which on closer inspection proved to be some natives, resting their half-naked bodies after their toil in the diggings.

Truly it was a dreary scene—and I sighed at my dreary prospect.

CHAPTER III.

THE DIAMOND-FIELDS.

Ups-and-downs of medical practice—Mode of working the diggings—The kopjes—Morning markets—My first baboon-hunt—Preparation for first journey.

I HAD a still further cause to be downcast. It was not only that the aspect of the diamond-fields was altogether unattractive, and that the weather was so rough and changeable that I felt it depressing in the extreme, but I was perplexed at what seemed to me the hopeless state of my finances.

Relying upon the promises of the Fauresmith merchant who had befriended me, I had not taken the precaution, before leaving Port Elizabeth, to obtain from Herr Adler the letters of introduction which would have been of service to me on my first arrival at the diamond-fields; and I found myself in the predicament of having only a few shillings of ready money, barely sufficient to pay for a night's lodging and a day's victuals. I had to gain the means of subsistence, and I had to provide for my further journey. One of two courses lay open to me: I must either dig for diamonds, or I must at once secure a practice, or at least earn some fees

among the heterogeneous and often doubtful characters of which the population was composed. My difficulty was increased by the very slight knowledge I had of either Dutch or English; the few words I had acquired barely sufficed to enable me to make myself understood, and were quite inadequate to allow me to carry on a conversation upon the most ordinary matters, far less to offer my services to a patient whose sickness required advice. But on the horns of a dilemma I was not long in coming to a decision. I knew that even to commence the avocation of digging necessitated the possession of at least some capital, which I could not command, whilst, by borrowing a few simple articles of furniture for a week or two, and starting as a doctor, in a tent for a surgery, I might hope to be consulted by clients who would pay me fees enough to ward off starvation.

I had one letter in my pocket which was the means of introducing me to an opening. The person to whom it was addressed was out of health, and was contemplating a visit to Europe for the medical advice which he could not obtain in the diamond-fields. By good fortune he understood German, and having ascertained from the letter which I forwarded to him that I was a doctor, and being of a practical and frugal turn of mind, he came to the conclusion that, before incurring the delay and expense of the long journey, he would try whether I could do him any good. In the course of a week he found my treatment of his

disorder so successful that he professed himself quite satisfied as to my capability, and definitely abandoned his projected return to Europe. I, for my part, had not quite the same practical qualities as my patient; and not having made any precise terms as to remuneration, was obliged to submit to whatever payment he chose to make. Under the circumstances I was only too thankful to accept an old half-rotten tent-hut and a few items of common furniture; although I should not omit to mention that, at the solicitation of my friend of Fauresmith, he subsequently consented to advance me the sum of 5*l.* by way of loan.

The hut of which I had thus become the proprietor was about eleven feet wide by ten feet long and seven feet high. It consisted simply of deal laths covered with canvas so decayed by damp that it kept out neither wind nor dust. The laths creaked and rattled with unintermitted vibration; and had it not been for the shelter afforded by a substantial warehouse erected by its side, I am certain it would not have survived the gusts that beat upon it; as it was, it seemed to be warped and twisted out of shape as often as the wind blew with any violence from the south. It was situated in the direct road leading to Kimberley, which is the chief settlement of the district, but it was separated from the highway by a broad gutter, over which it was necessary to jump in order to reach the door; and this was nothing more than a light framework covered with canvas, which I endeavoured by night

to make somewhat secure by supplementing its fastening with an iron bar that I happened to find on the bare earth which formed the floor of my apartments. A piece of old sheeting that flapped backwards and forwards with every breeze did duty as a window.

The interior was partitioned into two chambers by a dilapidated green curtain. The larger compartment was my work-room and surgery, the furniture consisting of an unpainted table, two old chairs, and a couple of chests, one of which held my drugs and the other my books. If patients happened to flock in unusual numbers, as they would when a farmer brought his whole family of children, these chests were the best substitutes I could provide for the comfortable arm-chairs and lounges with which my European colleagues are accustomed to furnish their consulting-rooms. The second apartment, considerably smaller than the other, was my kitchen, dining-room, and bedroom all in one, and necessarily the place where, until I could afford to keep a servant, I was obliged to perform the most menial offices in my own behalf. The bed, in which during the cold weather I spent many a sleepless night, corresponded only too well with the rest of the furniture, the only article with the least pretension to respectability being a little case which I had brought with me from Europe.

My desire to get away into the interior grew stronger and stronger. However, before I could gain the means to start, I had first to pay off my

liabilities, which included 300 florins owing to the Holitzer Savings Bank, and 16*l.* due to Herr Michaelis. I resolved accordingly to limit myself to the barest necessities of life, and for some months, in spite of being absolutely compelled to incur the expense of changing my abode, I practised the most rigid economy, and lived in the completest seclusion. The high price of provisions, and the low value of money considerably alarmed me, and I made a point of transacting all my housekeeping myself. My rule was to wait until it was dark, and the streets were empty, and then to go out, and after making my few purchases to get in a sufficient supply of water for the next day; of this I always required plenty, not only because it was necessary for the preparation of my drugs, and the general demands of my profession, but because I was my own laundress and my own cook. It is almost superfluous to add, that I was likewise my own tailor.

But I have no wish to dwell upon any further details of my household difficulties at that time, beyond making the remark that all my proceedings had to be carried on with the utmost secrecy. Any revelation of the true state of my private affairs would have seriously affected my position as a medical man. It was with no little satisfaction that I found myself working my way, little by little, into a very fair practice. Between the 26th of August, the date of my arrival, and the beginning of October, I had accumulated enough to discharge my liabilities.

By degrees I was able to launch out a little in my expenditure, and to emerge in some measure from my seclusion; and although I was obliged still to reside in a tent-hut, which was a source of personal inconvenience to myself, I never found it any detriment to my public position. It was a very great relief to me that a considerable number of Germans, on hearing of the arrival of a new doctor who could speak their language, were glad to make their way to my quarters. Their visits were a mutual advantage to both parties, for while they had the benefit of my German, I managed, from my intercourse with them, to make a wonderful progress in my knowledge of Dutch.

The diamond-fields of South Africa lie chiefly in the English province of Griqualand West, a district that simultaneously with the discovery of its subterranean treasure became an apple of discord among the native princes. The Griqua king Waterboer, and the Batlapin chiefs Yantje and Gassibone, all strove for an absolute possession, though it was very certain that none of them had any definite or just claim to assert. Waterboer possessed the principal part of the land on each side of the lower course of the Vaal and Modder Rivers; Yantje held the territory north of the mouth of the Harts River; while Gassibone made good his sway over the district that lay between the Vaal and the Harts on the north-east. The Korannas occupied the Vaal valley from Fourteen Streams to the mouth of the Harts.

Although the first diamonds that were found were by the Boers somewhat contemptuously called "pebbles," the discovery stirred up amongst them a keen desire for the acquisition of territory; and when the annexation of the diamond-fields was subsequently effected by the English, the controversy that was waged between the Boers and the Government of the Orange Free State was very bitter, both sides claiming to be the rightful possessors by virtue of concessions that had been made to them by one or other of the native chieftains, Waterboer, Yantje, and Gassibone.

As the weakest must always go to the wall, so the Orange Free State, after a brief effort to assert the rights of ownership, was obliged to yield; nevertheless it did not cease to insist upon the justice of its original claim. All attempts of England to arbitrate between the new province and the Republic, all efforts to gain recognition for laws that should compass on equal terms the mutual benefit of the conflicting States, were altogether unavailing, until at last England herself, either prompted by her own magnanimity, or impelled by some sense of justice, finally purchased the claims of the Free State by a compensation of 90,000*l.*, besides giving a pledge to contribute 15,000*l.* towards the extension of a railroad which should connect the Free State with one of the lines in the eastern portion of Cape Colony.

The whole region of the diamond-fields may be subdivided into three districts. The oldest fields are on the Vaal River, and extend from the town of

Bloemhof, in the Transvaal, to the river-diggings, at the confluence of the Vaal and the Harts; next to them are the dry-diggings, so called because the "pebbles" were originally obtained by sifting the earth and not by washing it—these lie around the town of Kimberley; and thirdly, there are the fields at Sagersfontein and Coffeefontein, in the Orange Free State, beyond the English dependency in Griqualand.

The settlement at the river-diggings sprang up with a rapidity as marvellous as those of California. At first, Klipdrift, opposite Pniel, a mission station, was regarded as its capital and centre; but within the last nine years, Kimberley (formerly known as New Rush) has become so important, that it necessarily holds first rank.

Within a year after the discovery of the first "crystal stone" in the valley of the Vaal, where the indolent Korannas alone had dragged on a dreamy existence, long rows of tenements had started up, although for the most part they were merely unsubstantial huts; but very soon South Africa, from end to end, became infected with the diamond-fever. Young and old, sick and healthy, servants and masters, country-folk and townsmen, sailors and soldiers deserting their calling; and Dutch Boers, with their whole families, yielded to the impulse to migrate to the alluring scene that had suddenly become so famous. The encampments that they made were transformed with incredible speed into regular towns of 4000 or 5000 inhabitants; and

when the intelligence was circulated that the "Star of Africa," a diamond of eighty-three carats and a half, had been picked up, every European steamer brought over hundreds of adventurers, all eager to take their chance of securing similar good fortune for themselves.

Thus in addition to Klipdrift grew up the town of Hebron, River Town, Gong Gong, Blue Jacket, New Kierk's Rush, Delporthshope, Waldeck's Plant and others, the glory of many of them, however, being destined to be very transient, some of them passing away as suddenly as they had risen. The report was no sooner spread that on the plain of the Dutoitspan Farm, below the river-diggings on the Vaal, diamonds had been found in abundance on the surface of the earth, than the old stations were forthwith abandoned, every one hurrying off in hot haste to the dry-diggings, which were supposed to be much more prolific.

Out of the large number of those who succeeded in quickly realizing large fortunes, a large proportion squandered their wealth as rapidly as they had acquired it; and as the new settlements soon developed themselves into dens of vice and demoralization, the majority of the population, being mere adventurers, came utterly to grief.

On the Vaal itself the diamonds are collected from the alluvial rubble. This rubble consists of blocks of greenstone, containing fine, almond-shaped chalcidies and agates, some as large as a man's fist and like milk quartz, others smaller and of a pink

or carmine tint, and occasionally blue or yellow ; it covers the district between Bloemhof and Hebron, and is known distinctively as Vaal-stone. But besides greenstone, the rubble includes a number of other elements ; it consists partially of fragments of the trap-dyke that is characteristic of the district between Hebron and the mouth of the Harts, as well as of nearly all the hills in the east of Cape Colony, in the Orange Free State, and in Griqualand ; it contains likewise a certain proportion of milk-quartz, clay-slate, sand yielding magnetic iron, and numerous pyropes ; these vary in size from that of a grain of millet to that of a grain of maize, and were awhile mistaken for garnets and rubies ; moreover, it contains portions of the limestone that extends both ways from the Vaal, though not forming the actual valley of the river ; it is a stone in which I never discovered any fossils.

The diggers, after obtaining their portion of diamond rubble from the "claims," as the parcels of ground allotted them by the authorities were called, had first to convey it down to the river ; they had next to sift it from the heavier lumps of stone, and then to wash it in "cradles," three or four feet long and about one and a half wide, until they had entirely got rid of the clay. In the residuum they had finally to search carefully for the treasure. The stones found in this locality were, as a general rule, very small, but their colour was good and their quality fine ; they were called "glass-stones," whilst the larger and more valuable brilliants obtained in

the two other districts were distinguished as "true river-stones."

The second, and hitherto the most important diamond-field, is that which I have called the central-diggings; they are what formerly were understood by the dry-diggings. They include the four mines



SQUARE IN DUTOITSPAN.

in the Kimberley district, and form two separate groups, the north-western containing Kimberley, and Old de Beers adjoining it on the east, and the eastern group containing Dutoitspan, with Bultfontein closing it in on the south and west. This eastern group lies about two miles from Kimberley,

and about one mile from Old de Beers. Kimberley itself is about twenty-two miles to the south-east of Klipdrift, and is the most important of the four mines I have mentioned, being that where the greatest numbers of diamonds of all qualities are found. The stones found at Dutoitspan are valued very much on account of their very bright yellow colour, those obtained at Bultfontein being generally smaller, but equal in purity to the "river-stones."

Diamond-mines vary in depth from forty-five to 200 feet, and may be from 200 to 700 yards in diameter. The diggings are locally called "kopjes," being divided into "claims," which are either thirty feet square, or thirty feet long by ten feet wide; of these a digger may hold any number from one to twenty, but he is required to work them all. For the ordinary "claim" the monthly payment generally amounts to about twenty florins for ground-rent and for water-rate, made to the Government and to a Mining Board, which consists of a committee of diggers appointed to overlook the working of the whole. In Dutoitspan and Bultfontein there is an additional tax paid to the proprietors, i. e. the owners of the farms; but in the Kimberley and Old de Beers group the Government has purchased all rights of possession from the firm of Ebden and Co.

I have little doubt in my own mind that these pits are the openings of mud craters, but I am not of opinion that the four diggings are branches of the same crater; it is only a certain resemblance

between the stones found in Old de Beers and those found in Kimberley that affords the least ground for considering that there is any subterranean communication between the two diggings. At the river-diggings I believe that one or more crater-mouths existed in the vicinity of the river bed above Bloemhof.

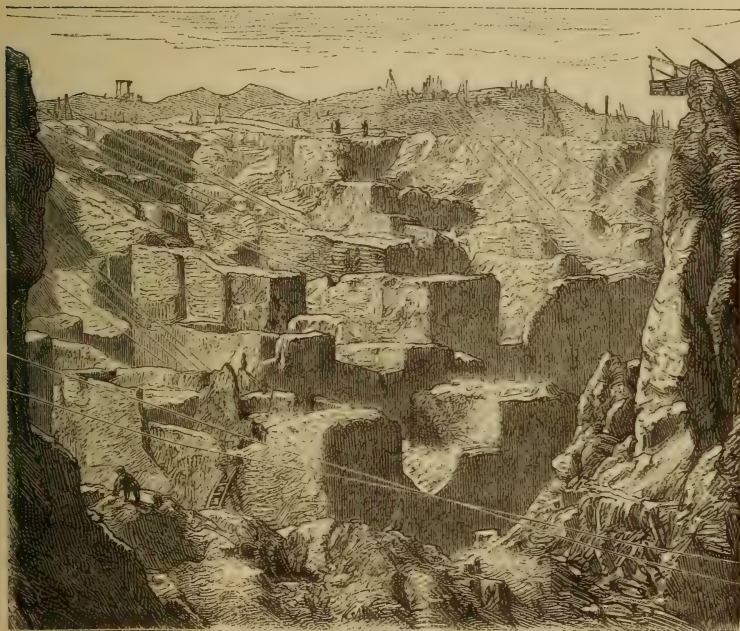
The palmy days of the diamond-diggings were in 1870 and 1871, when, if report be true, a swaggering digger would occasionally light his short pipe with a 5*l.* note, and when a doctor's assistant was able to clear 1100*l.* in seven months. But since 1871 the value of the diamonds has been constantly on the decline; and although the yield has been so largely increased that the aggregate profits have not diminished, yet the actual expenses of working have become tenfold greater. Notwithstanding the fall in the value of the stones, the price of the land has risen immensely. At the first opening of the Kimberley kopje, the ordinary claim of 900 square feet could be had for 10*l.* It is true that the purchase only extended to the surface of the soil; but now that the excavations are made to the depth of about 200 feet, some of the richer pits fetch from 12,000*l.* to 15,000*l.*, a proof that the real prosperity of the diamond-fields has not deteriorated, because (just as in the gold diggings) the rush of adventurers eager for sudden wealth has been replaced by the application of diligent and systematic industry.

As time has progressed, the mode of obtaining the

diamonds has gradually become more skilled and scientific. As the diggers at first worked in their allotments with the assistance of what hired labourers they could get, Hottentots, Kaffirs, and Bechuanas, their apparatus was of the rudest character. It consisted only of a stake, driven into the ground at the upper edge of the pit, with an iron or wooden pulley attached, enabling them to draw up the buckets of diamond-earth by hand. This acted very well as long as the walls of the mine were perpendicular; but when they were at all on the incline, or when, as would sometimes happen, the earth had to be carried a hundred yards or more over the heads of other workers, one stake was driven in at the bottom of the pit and three at the top, and between two of these a cylinder, two or three feet in diameter, or a great wheel, was kept in motion, by natives turning handles at both ends; by this means the full buckets were lifted, and the empty lowered simultaneously; a rope of stout iron-wire connected the third upright stake with the one at the bottom of the pit, and along this there ran two grooved iron rods, that supported a framework, provided with a hook to which the bucket could be attached. As the excavations grew deeper, and the diggers became the owners of more than one claim apiece, the expense of raising the larger quantities of earth, and the waste of time, began to be seriously felt, and led to the introduction of wooden whims—great capstans worked by horse-power. Many of these cumbrous machines are still in use; but the

more wealthy diggers, as well as the companies that have recently been formed, now generally employ steam engines.

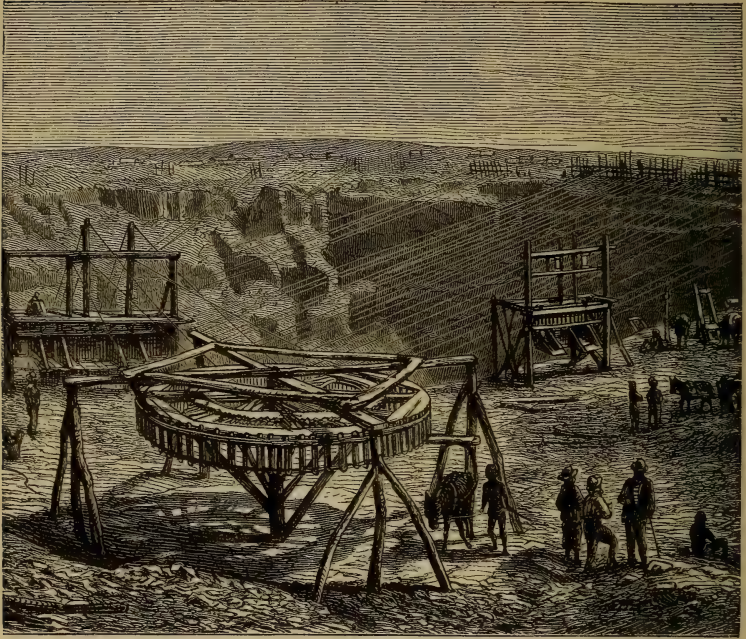
This is specially the case at the Kimberley kopje. Although these are the smallest of the diamond-mines, they are the richest, and consequently attract



KIMBERLEY KOPJE IN 1871.

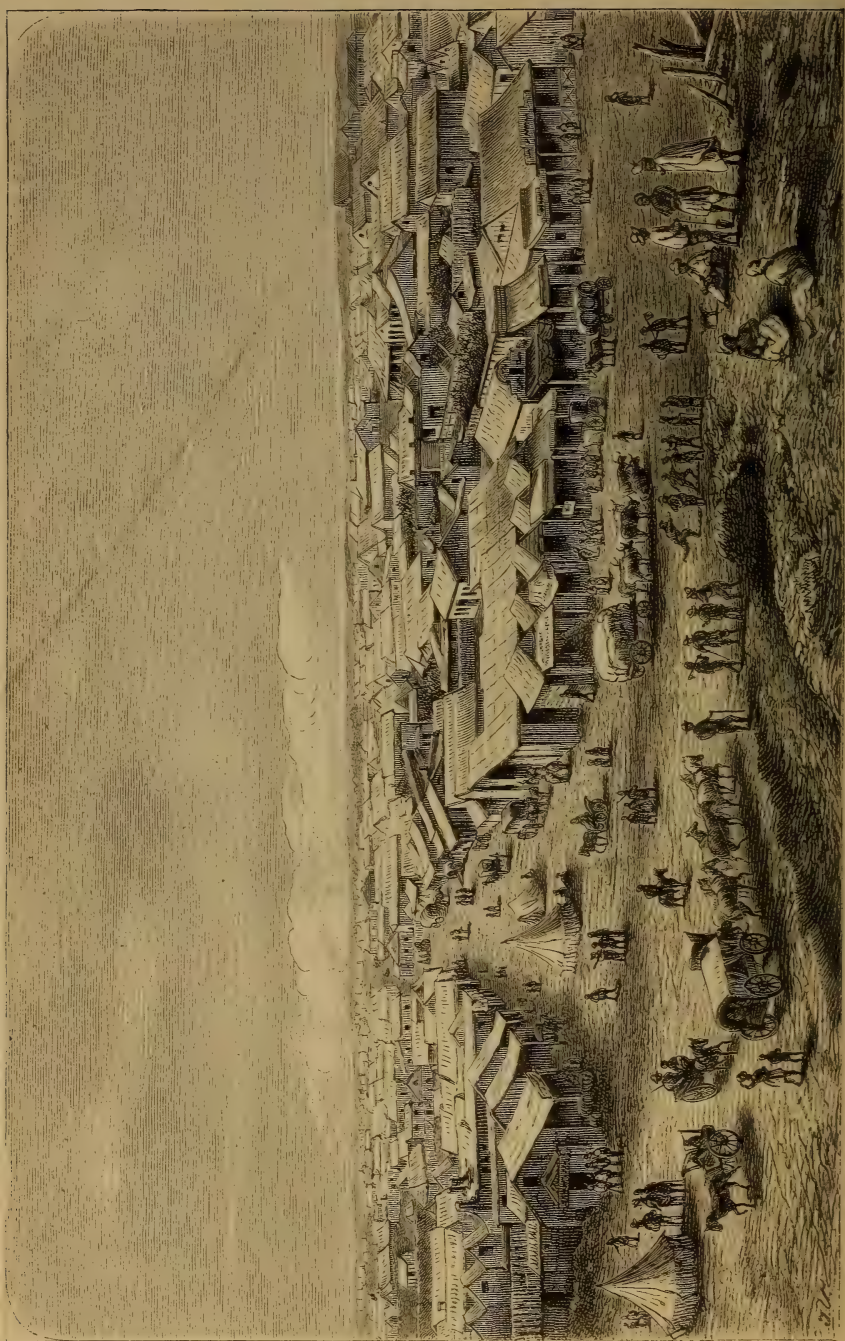
the largest proportion of diggers. It soon became impossible to find space for the separate hand-pulleys to stand side by side, and huge deal scaffolds were erected, three stories high, so that three distinct lifting-apparatus could be worked one above another, without requiring a basement area of much

more than six square feet. At present, however, the edge of the embankment is almost entirely covered with horse-whims and steam-engines that have been brought from England.



HORSE-WHIMS IN THE DIAMOND QUARRIES.

It is no longer allowable for the diamond-earth to be sorted near the place where it is brought up, a practice that was found to lead to much annoyance and disagreement; but the owners are obliged to subject their earth to scrutiny, either within the limits of their own allotments, or to have it conveyed to a piece of ground hired outside the town for the purpose.



The process of sorting is also more complicated than it used to be. Formerly the earth containing the diamonds was cleared of its coarser parts by means of sieves ; it was then turned over and shaken out on to a flat table, where it was merely examined by the help of a stick, or a little piece of iron. It necessarily resulted from this rough-and-ready method that many diamonds were overlooked, and the earth thus examined was afterwards sold as being very likely to yield a number of small stones, and often proved very remunerative to the buyer.

Now, however, washing-machines, some of them very elaborate, worked by steam-power, horse-power, or hand-labour, according to the means of the claim-owners, are almost universally employed. The earth is gradually cleared of clay, until only the stony particles remain ; and these are rinsed repeatedly in water until they are thoroughly clean ; then they are placed, generally every evening, in sieves for the moisture to drain off, and after a slight shaking, they are turned on to a table before the claim-owner or overseer. Whatever diamonds there may be, are generally detected at first sight ; being heavier than other stones, they gravitate to the bottom of the fine-wire sieve, and consequently come uppermost when the contents are turned out for the final inspection.

In proportion as the machinery has become more elaborate, and the modes of working more perfect, so have expenses increased, and diamond-digging now requires a considerable capital. This of course

has tended to clear the work of a large crowd of mere adventurers, and made it a much calmer and more business-like pursuit than it was originally. The authorized rules and regulations for the protection of the diggers and of the merchants have likewise materially improved the condition of both.



KIMBERLEY KOPJE IN 1872.

As viewed from the edge of the surrounding clay walls, the appearance of one of the great diamond-fields is so peculiar as almost to defy any verbal description. It can only be compared to a huge crater, which, previously to the excavations, was filled to the very brink on which we stand with

volcanic eruptions, composed of crumbling diamond-bearing earth, consisting mainly of decomposed tufa. That crater now stands full of the rectangular "claims," dug out to every variety of depth. Before us are masses of earth, piled up like pillars, clustered like towers, or spread out in plateaus; sometimes they seem standing erect as walls, sometimes they descend in steps; here they seem to range themselves in terraces, and there they gape asunder as pits; altogether they combine to form a picture of such wild confusion, that at dusk, or in the pale glimmer of moonshine, it would require no great stretch of imagination to believe them the ruins of some city of the past, that after the lapse of centuries was being brought afresh to light.

But any illusion of this sort is all dispelled, as one watches the restless activity of the throngs that people the bottom of the deep dim hollow. The vision of the city of the dead dissolves into the scene of a teeming ant-hill; all is life and eagerness and bustle. The very eye grows confused at the labyrinth of wires stretching out like a giant cobweb over the space below, while the movements of the countless buckets making their transit backwards and forwards only add to the bewilderment. Meanwhile to the ear everything is equally trying; there is the hoarse creaking of the windlasses; there is the perpetual hum of the wires; there is the constant thud of the falling masses of earth; there is the unceasing splash of water from the pumps; and

these, combined with the shouts and singing of the labourers, so affect the nerves of the spectator, that, deafened and giddy, he is glad to retire from the strange and striking scene.

To this brief and general description of the diamond-fields, I would be allowed to add one or two characteristics of the street-life in the settlements.

The morning-markets, or public auctions, which are held every day, except Sunday, in the open places in Kimberley and Dutoitspan, are very interesting. They are presided over by a market-master or auctioneer, appointed by the Government, with permission, however, to hold private sales for his own benefit. The office may be somewhat trying to the lungs, but it has the reputation of being very lucrative. From six to eight a.m., the whole of the unpaved market-place, which lies in the heart of the iron and canvas dwellings, is covered with ox-waggons, laden not only with flour, fruit, vegetables, potatoes, maize, butcher's meat, poultry, and other items of consumption, but with firewood, forage, wood for thatching, and all the other necessaries of domestic economy. The sales are exclusively by auction. Five per cent. of the proceeds goes to the Government, and two per cent. to the market-master. The prices of the commodities are very fluctuating, demand and supply being continually out of proportion. I have known the cost of a sack of potatoes vary from 15s. to nearly 4l.

Besides the ordinary morning-markets, public

auctions are held on all days except holidays in halls erected for the purpose; and in the evenings, sales of articles not included in the usual routine of business are carried on in the canteens, to which purchasers are invited by announcements on large placards, notifying that drink will be distributed gratis during the proceedings.

In former years, the majority of the canteens were shocking dens of vice, forming the worst feature of the district; latterly, however, there has been a considerable diminution in their number. The wells that have been made in various parts of the streets, and in the outskirts of the settlements, have been an inestimable boon, and the throngs that ever surround them show how highly they are appreciated. The water is drawn up in buckets by Kaffirs, or by horses; it is sold, not given away, and many hundreds of pounds are readily expended for the supply of that which is as indispensable for the diamond-washing as for the common offices of life.

A residence in the diamond-fields undoubtedly has various inconveniences, but nothing is so trying as the atmosphere. Every day during the dry winter season, lungs, eyes, and ears are painfully distressed by the storms of dust that impregnate the air with every conceivable kind of filth, which, penetrating the houses, defiles (if it does not destroy) everything on which it rests. The workers in the diggings, the drivers of waggons, and all whose occupations keep them long in the open air, are especially sufferers from this cause.

Nor is the summer much less unpleasant. During the rainy season the country is flooded by the violent downpour; the rain often fills up the shallow brack-pan (one of the salt lakes that dry up every year, lying in a depression about half a mile long at the south end of Dutoitspan, in a single day; and as the immediate consequence, the streets of Kimberley become so deluged that the traffic is impeded, and foot passengers can only with difficulty proceed at all. The new corporation has endeavoured to remedy this difficulty by laying down gutters, and taking other measures for draining the thoroughfares.

For a few days' recreation at Christmas, 1872, I agreed to go on an excursion, baboon hunting, on the neighbouring hills in the west of the Orange Free State—the party consisting, besides myself, of a young German merchant, who found more opportunity for such diversion here than at home; a young Pole from Posen, whose mere love of adventure had brought him to the diamond-fields; and a Fingo, engaged to carry our baggage, and whose burden kept him in a perpetual vapour-bath. The Pole and myself were both duly equipped in proper hunting-costume.

I was very anxious to make myself acquainted with the animal-world on the hills that bounded the eastern horizon; and, having visited my patients, and ascertained that they could dispense with my services for a short time, I started off from Dutoitspan early in the afternoon of Christmas Eve.

Involuntarily the memories of former Christmas Eves rose up within my mind, and I could not help comparing the past with the present, contrasting the festivities of the cheerful room, well warmed to defy the wintry rigour, with the tropical glow of an African sun, where not a single external circumstance recalled an association with the season.

Our way led at first across a plain covered with dwarf bushes, few of them exceeding eighteen inches high. Here and there, in depressions of the soil, were patches of soft green turf, long grass only growing upon higher and more rocky places.

All over the wide flats were innumerable swarms of insects, of which several species of locusts especially attracted our notice. Some of these were very beautiful in colour, and were armed with a kind of projecting shield. Varying from two to three inches in length, their cylindrical bodies were either of light or dark green, the wing-sheaths being bordered with red. In quite a sluggish condition thousands of them had settled on the milk-bushes (*Euphorbiaceæ*), and the least touch made them fall to the ground, apparently lifeless. On my journey from Port Elizabeth I had wondered how it was that the locusts, subject to the attacks of almost countless enemies of the feathered tribe, from the eagle to the wild duck, should venture so constantly to settle in the most exposed parts of the bushes; and I now solved the mystery by discovering through my sense of smell that they eject a most offensive fluid, the disgusting odour of which we had the

greatest difficulty in removing from our hands even after a thorough scrubbing with sand.

Besides the locusts, we found several kinds of beetles—some sand-beetles, two large ground-beetles, and a leaf-beetle that gleamed amidst the foliage with a metallic sheen. The small variety of the vegetation, and its scorched-up condition, was quite enough to explain the entire absence of butterflies, although moths of many kinds were present to supply their place.

We saw hardly any quadrupeds. Excepting some great shrew-mice, we came across nothing but a bright red rodent (*Rhizæna*) and a ground-squirrel. These were sitting up on their hind quarters, close to the aperture of their underground retreats; only waiting a moment, as if to scrutinize the new comers, they made off with all speed, the *Rhizæna* grunting softly, the squirrel giving a shrill, sharp whistle.

The bird of which we saw the greatest numbers was the small dark South African starling, which ever hovers over the numerous ant-hills or perches on the top of solitary thorns. It is a lively little creature, careful to survey a stranger only from a prudent distance, and given to frequent the deserted holes of rodents and ground-squirrels, especially betaking itself thither when chased or wounded.

After we had proceeded about an hour and a half we reached the border of one of the rectangular "pans" which are the miniature representatives of the large shallow salt-lakes that are so characteristic of South Africa. The salt-pan itself was dry, but

close beside it was a small rain-pool full of greenish water, a little of which, mixed with a spoonful of brandy, we found palatable enough. Hereabouts we fell in with a Kaffir tending some sheep; and



KAFFIR SHEPHERD.

having purchased his goodwill by a little present of tobacco, we induced him to give us what information he could about the various farms lying further eastward. We had fixed upon a farm known both as Kriko Farm and as Kuudu Place for our headquarters, from which we could make excursions to the hills.

Towards evening we reached the first spur of the heights in the Free State, running due north and south. The vegetation was already becoming more luxuriant. A large number of shrubs that from the diamond-fields had looked mere specks turned out to be camel-thorn acacias, their broad-spreading crowns and great flat seed-pods declaring them akin to the mimosas. Since that date most of them have fallen under the axe, and they have been reduced to ashes as fuel at the diggings. Their trunks are often two feet thick, covered with a rough dark-grey bark, full of knots, and yielding a sound hard wood. Two things particularly arrested our attention; first, the great thorns growing in pairs three inches long, with their points far asunder, and at the base as thick as a man's finger; and, secondly, the collections of strange birds' nests hanging down from the branches. These nests belonged to a colony of the sociable weaver-birds (*Philetærus socius*), and their construction was very singular. When the birds have found a suitable branch, the whole flock sets to work with the industry of bees to make a common erection that may shelter them all. Each pair of birds really builds its own nest of dry grass and covers it in; but so closely are the nests fitted together, that when finished the entire fabric has the appearance of one huge nest covered in by a single conical roof, the whole being often not less than three feet high and from two to five feet in diameter. The boughs which project beyond the structure are not unfrequently known to break under

the accumulated load. The entrances to all the separate nests are from below, an arrangement by which they might be presumed to be sheltered, not merely from the rain, but from attacks of any kind; this, however, is by no means the case, and they are liable to be invaded by the larger kinds of snakes, such as the cobra. I myself, some years later, was successful in killing a great snake just as it had crept into one of these weaver-birds' nests. I was at Oliphantfontein Farm, and happened to catch sight of its tail just as the huge reptile was beginning its work of depredation. It had killed and thrown out several birds, and was commencing to devour the eggs and fledglings inside; it snapped viciously at every parent bird that was not scared away by its hissing. I was afraid, if I fired, that I might only kill the birds that I was desirous to save; accordingly, I took up a stone, and flung it with so good an aim that I brought the creature down to the ground, where a couple of shots soon despatched it before it could make good a retreat.

As evening drew on we arrived at a grassy plain that extended to the hills, three miles away. Here, beneath a jutting eminence, were two small huts, forming a canteen kept by a native; but its existence was a proof to us that we were in the road between the diamond-fields and the Free State. We declined an invitation from the host to sleep here; and although we had to make our way through deep sand-drifts, we resolved to go on further.

It was quite late when we reached the Kriko Farm.

I had made up my mind to spend the night in the open air; and as we were all very thirsty, we followed out the glimmer of some water until we reached a half-dry pool, at the edge of which was a level spot that we selected as our camping-place for the night.

Supper was soon ready. A few red-legged plovers and some small bustards (of the kind that the Boers call "patluperks"), which we had shot in the course of the day, afforded us a meal that we thoroughly enjoyed; nor had we a less hearty relish for a cup of tea, although it was made from the water of the pond which, when we came to see it by daylight, we were compelled to confess that nothing but the most agonizing pangs of thirst could have induced us to taste. Even in the fire-light it flickered with all the colours of the rainbow, but by the light of day it revealed putrescence itself, and even the cattle refused to drink it.

While we were sitting round our fire, talking over the incidents of the afternoon, we were favoured by a visit from three Korannas. They had seen our light from the farmhouse, about a hundred yards away, and had supposed that we were a body of Basutos, from the west of the Free State, travelling in search of work, and were not a little surprised to come upon a party of white men enjoying themselves in an encampment. They did not stay long with us; and as soon as they were gone, and the barking of the dogs at the farm had ceased, a dead silence ensued, broken only by the chirping of a little grass-

hopper. After the dusty atmosphere of Dutoitspan, the pure, fresh air was most delightful to us all, and we soon resigned ourselves to sleep.

Early in the morning we explored the immediate neighbourhood of the farm. It lies in a wide valley, into which open several cross-valleys formed by outlying chains of hills. The hill-sides are steep, often almost perpendicular, exhibiting huge blocks of trap. It was a refreshing thing for our eyes to look upon such a rich expanse of vegetation, even the flat summits of the hills being clothed with arborescent mimosas. Except some striped mice, we saw no mammalia at all, but birds of many sorts—turtle-doves, plovers, long-tailed black and white shrikes, and a whole flock of common brown carrion hawks—were perching upon the rocks, which were so white with the guano that they could be seen fifteen miles away. Besides these, we came across some small red falcons and several handsome fork-tailed kites. Altogether it was a favourable opportunity, of which we did not fail to take advantage, of filling our bags betimes with some dainty morsels for dinner. Meanwhile we were able to make some additions to our entomological spirit-flasks, in the way of curious frogs, spiders, lizards, and chameleons.

On our way back from our morning ramble we met the farmer. In answer to my inquiry how we ought to proceed to get at the baboons on the hills, he was extremely communicative. He said that there were two herds in the neighbourhood, the

smaller and wilder of which generally went in the morning to drink in an adjoining glen, but the other was not so shy, and ventured every day to the second pool beyond where we were standing. He complained of them as a great and perpetual nuisance. They were always on the look-out, and no sooner was a field or a garden left unguarded, than they would be down at once, break through the hedges, and devour the crops. They were likewise very destructive amongst the sheep. If a shepherd happened to leave his post for ever so short a time, or even to fall asleep, the baboons, who had been watching their chance from the heights, would be down upon the flock in the valley, and seizing the lambs, and ripping up their stomachs with their teeth, would feast upon the milk they contained; then leaving the poor mangled victim writhing on the ground, would lose no time in repeating the terrible operation upon another. This was a statement that I have since often had confirmed.

So pitiable was the farmer's account of the losses he had in various ways sustained through the baboons, that we could quite understand the grin of satisfaction with which he learnt our object. He became more and more loquacious in his desire to render information; and when I further explained to him that we were anxious to get some of their skins to stuff, and to carry off some of their skulls, he was quite astounded; he had never heard of such a thing, and exclaiming, "Allmachttag, wat will ye dun?" he walked off, shaking his head, to tell his

wife of the doctor's "wonderlijke" proposal to shoot a "babuin," and to send its skin and its skull all the way to "Duitsland."¹

Many of the Free State farmers are simple and thoroughly good-hearted people, requiring only a little more culture to make them most agreeable companions. Among all my patients I never found any more grateful.

About the middle of the morning we left Kuudu Place and started eastwards, in the hope that we might be in time to catch the smaller herd at their drinking-place. We passed several huts occupied by Basutos and Korannas employed as labourers on the farm. The Basutos come from their homes in the east, with their wives, to hire themselves to the farmers; in return for which they receive their food, and an annual payment of a stipulated number of sheep, or occasionally one or two oxen, or a mare and foal, being moreover allotted a certain portion of land, where they may grow sorghum, maize, gourds, or tobacco.

During my subsequent travels, I learnt that many of the better class of farmers are really owners of small Basuto villages, from which they hire the population in this way. Mynheer Wessels, the proprietor of the canteen we had passed the day

¹ The Dutch spoken by most of the South African farmers is not pure, as in Europe; it is a mixture of English, Low-German, French, &c. That, however, which is spoken by the more educated Dutchmen in Cape Town, Bloemfontein, and other towns, is for the most part very good.

before, was a type of this class; his farm had a circumference of many miles, although he did not cultivate a thirty-sixth part of it. To provide himself with labourers, he had obtained the ownership of a district where the harvest had been lost through drought, and had found the residents only too glad to leave their homes on the Caledon River, and to migrate to more favourable quarters.

One very marked ethnographical distinction exists between the tribes of the Basutos and the Korannas in the way they build their huts; those of the Basutos being made of boughs in a cylindrical form, about three feet in diameter, and protected by conical roofs of reeds and dry grass, while the Korannas usually adopt the form of a hemisphere, and construct them of dead branches loosely covered with mats.

We had the honour of being surveyed by one of the black ladies; she wore nothing but a short petticoat of grey calico, and her forehead, cheeks, and breasts were tattooed in dark-blue ochre with a complication of wavy lines. She only looked at us from the boundary of her own domain.

Outside one of the Koranna huts my attention was caught by a man shabbily dressed in European costume, towards whom an old woman, also in dirty European dress, was hastening, brandishing a huge firebrand, from which a volume of smoke was pouring into the air. I was curious to know what the enormous firebrand could be wanted for, and could hardly believe that it was merely to light the man's short pipe; he did not move a muscle of his counte-

nance, but lowering it steadily with his hand, brought it into its due position and completed his object. I advanced towards the phlegmatic smoker, and found him courteous enough to answer a few inquiries as to what was the best route we could take to the hills.

It took little more than half an hour to reach the top of the hill, which proved to be an undulating plain, covered with bushes and blocks of stone. When we had advanced some distance along it, we found ourselves approaching the pool of which the farmer told us, and could distinctly hear the hoarse barking of the baboons. Looking across to the opposite side, about 300 yards away, we caught sight of a herd of seven, only four of them full grown, that seemed to pause and scan us carefully before they decamped to a glen on the right. With all speed we followed them for a little way, observing how the wet footprints showed that they were just returning from their drinking-place.

We did not, however, go very far in pursuit, being more desirous of falling in with the other and larger herd. Having knocked over another brace or two of doves, as a further contribution to our larder, we sat down to enjoy a mid-day repast, keeping up a careful scrutiny of the slopes all around us. We seemed to be watching all in vain, when suddenly, in the direction of the farm, there was to be heard an outcry, which as suddenly again died away. Some tall mimosas prevented us seeing to any great distance one way towards the farmhouse, and a stone

wall, some twelve feet high, hindered us the other way from getting a view of the bottom of the hills, so that we really had not the chance of ascertaining the cause of the commotion. By way of a joke, I said that perhaps the baboons had taken advantage of our dinner-hour to go and pay the farmer a visit. Scarcely had I said the words when a big baboon came springing up, not much more than 200 yards away, to the left; then another, then another and another; until there was a whole herd of them, going leisurely enough, and squatting down ever and again upon the stones. The farmer, with a bevy of servants, was in full chase; they were armed with sticks and stones, and kept shouting vehemently. Here we thought was a good chance for us; we would mount the hill across the line of the retreat, without diverting the attention of the baboons from the noisy crowd that was following them; and thus I hoped we might be able to get within gunshot unobserved.

As one of our party had only small shot, and the other nothing but a stick, I insisted upon their remaining close at my side, knowing that a full-grown baboon, when infuriated, is as dangerous a foe as a leopard.

We were more than half-way up the hill before there was a chance at all; and when a baboon did appear at last above us, it managed so adroitly to be always either beneath a bush or behind a stone, that to take a fair aim was simply impossible.

When the brute had gained the top of the hill, of

course it was hidden from view ; but we persevered, in hopes that on reaching the summit, if we did not catch sight of the same one again, we might see another. So far we were not disappointed. We had hardly finished our ascent when we spied a full-grown female, scarcely fifty yards in front of us. By ill-luck, however, I failed to secure a shot at it ; first, one of the black farm-servants came between me and my mark just at the very instant when I was about to fire ; and when I next managed to get within fair range, one of my friends raised such a prodigious shout that the creature bounded far away ; so that I had to go on in a prolonged pursuit, only at last to find that the chase must be abandoned as fruitless.

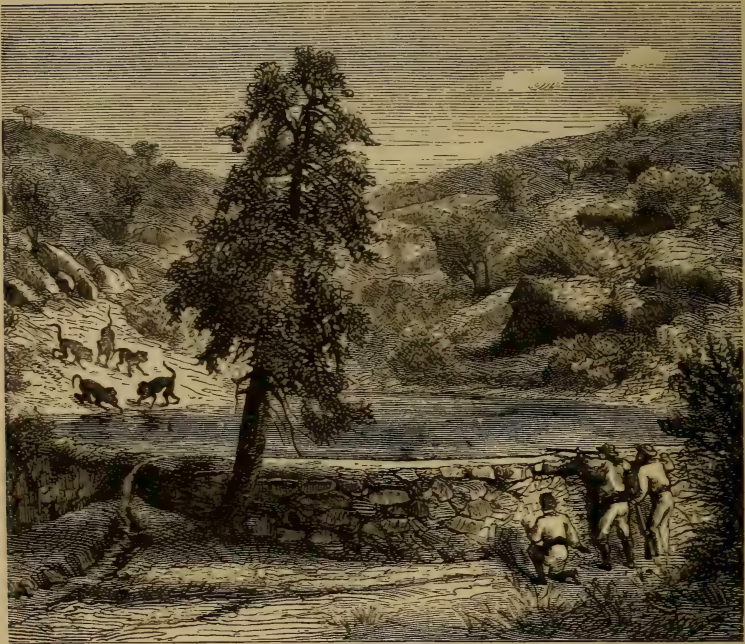
It may well be supposed that it was not quite in the best humour that we retraced our steps. It was not only that the last chance for that day had been missed, but it was most unlikely that so favourable an opportunity for getting near that herd would occur again.

On our return the Korannas informed us that what I had spoken of only in jest, had really transpired in fact ; the baboons, at the very hour when we were taking our refreshment, had been attracted by the bleating of some lambs, and began to make an attack upon the sheep-kraal. Detected in time, they were driven off ; and in order to prevent them from repeating their visit, a pursuit had been set on foot.

The men told us, however, that so far from being

effectually scared away, the baboons would be sure to come and drink at the other pond. Upon hearing this all our disappointment and fatigue were forgotten at once, and we were off without delay to the spot that was pointed out.

The pond, full of rain-water, lay in the valley; on



BABOON-HUNT.

the left, not a quarter of a mile off, were the hills we had just quitted; and opposite, on the right, was another ridge of hills, perhaps a mile away. Three sides of the pond were embanked, the embankment facing the house being of stone; the soil was sandy; the muddy water in one place was running in a

little creek ; some shrubs were growing between the clefts of the stones, and behind one of these, high enough to conceal our heads, we took up our position.

Only a few minutes had elapsed when one of the farm-boys drew our attention to what seemed little more than a couple of dark specks on the slope of the hills to the right ; but we could soon see that they were moving, and when they came within half a mile of us, we could distinctly recognize them as a herd of baboons. The boy said he was quite sure that they were on their way to the water ; but to our surprise they did not make any further advance. A quarter of an hour elapsed ; half an hour ; still no symptom of their approach. All at once, as if they had started from the earth by magic, at the open end of the pond, not sixty yards from our place of ambush, stood two huge males. When or how they had got there no one could tell ; probably they had come by a circuitous way through the valley, or it might be that they had crept straight down through the grass ; they had certainly eluded our observation.

Being anxious to watch the movements of the animals, and to ascertain whether they belonged to the herd playing under the mimosas, I refrained from firing, and determined to see what would follow next. Both baboons sprang towards the water, and leaning down, drank till they were satisfied ; then, having gravely stretched themselves, they stalked away solemnly on all fours in the direction of the herd. There was little doubt, therefore, that they

belonged to them, and had been sent forward to reconnoitre; for as soon as they got back, the entire herd put itself in motion, and made its way towards the pond. There were mothers taking care of their little ones; there were the half-grown animals, the boys and girls of the company; but there did not seem to be more than three or four full-grown males. At first only one baboon at a time came to the water's edge, and having taken its draught retired to the rest; but when about ten of them had thus ventured separately, they began to come in small groups, leaving the others rolling and jumping on the sand.

Our amusing study was very nearly being interrupted by the approach of two Koranna women, who came from the farm with their pitchers, to fetch water; but we were able to make signs to them not to come on, and thus continued to abide our time till we could get a shot. It was not long before two males—the same, I had no doubt, which we had noticed before—came and squatted themselves one on each side of the little creek, which certainly was not more than two feet across. When they stooped to drink, their heads could not have been four inches apart. Here was my chance. Crack went my rifle. But instead of either of them dropping, the two baboons started up; by a mutual instinct they both clutched their noses, gave a ringing bark, and scampered off. The whole herd took the alarm, and joining in the shrieking clamour, were soon lost to sight. One or two, however, of the larger animals

seemed to lag behind, and to look inquiringly, as if to ascertain the true condition of affairs.

We went down and examined the spot where the baboons had been drinking, and could come to no other conclusion than that the bullet had passed exactly through the narrow interval that had parted their heads; it had lodged just about three feet behind them.

Until the evening we waited and watched, coming to the conclusion that we would make our night encampment upon the spot; but nothing more was seen of the herd, although their noise could be heard all night long. Again next morning we kept a steady look-out, but they did not allow themselves to be seen. Likely enough they could spy us out from their position on the heights, and they were not inclined to venture from a retreat where their instinct told them they were masters of the situation.

After the exertions and disappointments of the day, all my companions seemed only too glad of their repose, and were soon fast asleep. I could not sleep at all; the perpetual barking of the baboons disturbed me; but beyond that there was not a sound to be heard; the breeze even was hushed. It was one of those nights which, under South African skies, never fail to leave a lasting impression upon the traveller's mind. Although the sky was dark the atmosphere was clear, and countless little clouds, varying in tint from milk-white to a brownish grey, hovering everywhere overhead,

formed a canopy so exquisite in its beauty that it could never fade from the memory.

Our Christmas excursion thus came to an end.

My medical practice continued to increase so rapidly, that I was able to lay by considerable sums towards the undertaking on which I was resolved. During the month of January, 1873, I purchased a waggon and a good many of the requisites for travelling; and early in February I considered my resources such as to justify my setting out on my first long journey, which, however, was to a certain extent to be only one of reconnoissance.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM DUTOITSPAN TO LIKATLONG.

My travelling companions—Departure from the diamond-fields—
 The Vaal River and valley—Visit to Koranna village—
 Structure of Koranna huts—Social condition of the Korannas
 —Klipdrift—Distinction between Bechuanas and Korannas
 —Interior of a Koranna hut—Fauna of the Vaal valley—A
 bad road—A charming glen—Cobras and their venom—
 Ring-neck snakes—The mud in the Harts River.

HAVING completed my equipment, and made all necessary preparations, I had next to make a decision, most important in expeditions of this kind, as to the individuals who should accompany me. My first idea had been to take with me only a few black servants; but on due consideration, I found it advisable to abandon this, and to travel with a party of white men. Without any hesitation my choice fell upon the same two young men who had been my companions in the baboon-hunt at Christmas; and, as a third associate, I invited Friedrich Eberwald, a native of Thuringia, to join us. He was an excellent fellow, who subsequently proved one of my most faithful friends, and in my second journey afforded me very valuable assistance; he had always had an irresistible love of seeing foreign

lands, and after having visited nearly all Europe and Asia Minor, and many parts of North and South America, he had come to try his luck in the diamond-fields, where, however, he had been very moderately successful.

The real object that I contemplated in my first journey was to accustom myself to the climate by spending a few weeks in the open air, as well as to ascertain by actual experience what amount of provisions and other necessaries would be required for a more prolonged expedition into the interior. My scheme was to go direct to Klipdrift, then down the valley of the Vaal River as far as the mouth of the Harts River, and after making our way north-east up the Harts valley, so as to get some acquaintance, if we could, with the Batlapin tribes, to return and reside again for a time in my old quarters at the diamond-fields.

In a party consisting of four men, five horses, and five dogs, we quitted the dusty atmosphere of Dutoitspan, and after several *contretemps* not worth recording, we reached the heights that border the banks of the Vaal River beyond Hebron, and with much satisfaction gazed upon the refreshing green of the valley, being very shortly afterwards gratified by the view of the river itself, then moderately full of water. On the southern bank we could discern the scattered huts of Pniel, a small Koranna village and a German missionary station.

This village had a most melancholy aspect, and a visit there convinced me that amongst no other

native race, with the exception, perhaps, of the Matabele, have missionary labours been so ineffectual as among the Korannas. Their circumstances, their



"FORE-SPANNING."

social condition, and their culture are all of the very lowest grade; and without accepting any of the benefits of civilization, they seem only to have adopted its vices; and drunkenness, entailing disease

and its other terrible consequences, prevails most lamentably amongst them.

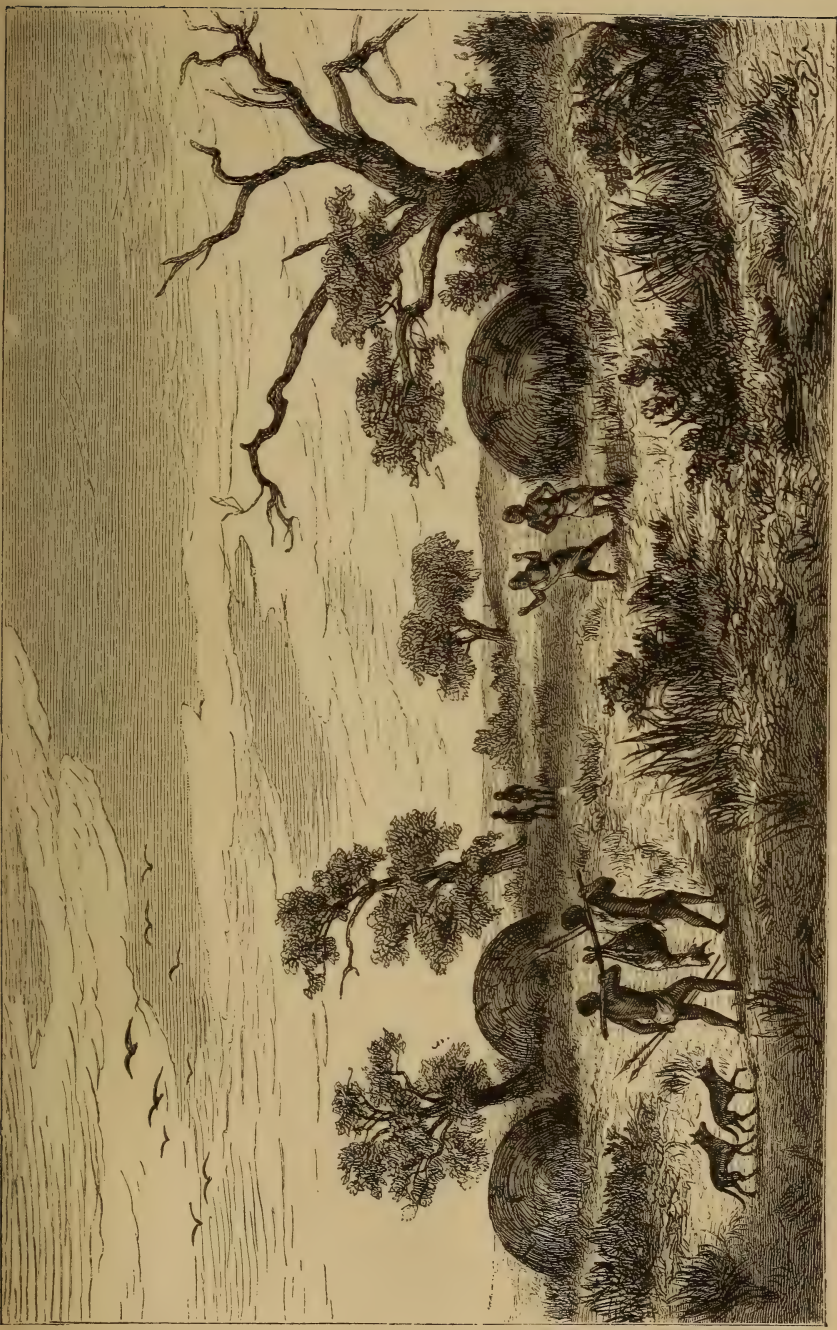
Of all South African races, the Korannas bestow the least labour upon the structure, and the least care upon the internal arrangements of their dwellings. Their indolence may be attributed to, or aggravated by, the climate; but in want of energy the two Hottentot tribes, the Korannas and



KORANNAS.

the Griquas, surpass even the calumniated Bushmen, who, at any rate, contrived to decorate the walls of the natural caves they inhabited with drawings in ochre, and to adorn their stone roof with figures, however roughly chiselled, of men and animals, and other objects of nature. It is only when he is utterly without the means of procuring the brandy which is his sole and engrossing desire,

KORANNA HUTS IN THE VALLEY OF THE HARIS RIVER.



that a Koranna is ever known to rouse himself from his habitual sloth, and inaptitude for endurance, to make an effort to hire himself out to an employer.

The huts may be seen either singly or in small groups, sometimes on the bare hillside, sometimes on the river-bank, or at the edge of a saltpan, or more rarely in the rocky glen of the river; they scarcely ever exceed twelve feet in diameter, and five feet in height; their shape, as far as its general want of symmetry allows it to be defined, may be said to be hemispherical; and they are all quite unenclosed. Their construction, as their appearance suggests, is of the most primitive order; the women build them by simply taking a number of branches, about six feet in length, arranging them in a circle, tying their upper ends all together in a bundle, and throwing some rush mats over the framework thus hastily put up. The external fabric is then complete. An aperture is left large enough to admit a man on all-fours; but this, which is the only communication with the open air, is often closed by another mat hung over it from the inside, where everything is as squalid and comfortless as can be conceived. A hollow dug out in the centre is the only fireplace; a pole, supported by two forked uprights, supports the entire wardrobe of the household, which rarely consists of more than a few tattered rags of European attire, and some sheepskins and goatskins; half a dozen pots and pans complete the inventory of the furniture. Although, as I have said, the huts ordinarily have no enclosure,

yet where the cows and goats are exposed to the nocturnal attacks of hyænas or leopards, a sort of shelter is occasionally made of dry mimosa branches, but as a general rule they have only a dunghill for their accommodation. In these dreariest of abodes a dull, dumb silence usually prevails; and it is only when brandy has been brought in from the neighbouring town, or procured from some itinerant dealer, that there is any animation or excitement. Morning and evening, as the naked children drive the cattle to their pasturage, or bring them back, there is some transient exhibition of vitality in the community; otherwise all is stillness and stagnation.

As an exceptional case, when a Koranna of somewhat superior means can afford himself the luxury of a few Makalahari and Masarwa as servants and slaves, a little agriculture is carried on, but it is well-nigh always on a very limited scale. No doubt many parts of the country offer great natural advantages for farming operations; and if a little labour were spent in forming embankments, and in judiciously diverting the streams of the Harts and Vaal rivers, the produce in all likelihood would be very abundant.

As a distinct race, the Korannas are dying out. In this respect, they are sharing the lot of the Hottentots proper who dwell in Cape Colony and Griqualand West, and of the Griquas whose home is in New or East Griqualand, or what is called Noman's-land round Rockstadt. So continual has been the diminution of their number, that they are not half what they formerly were, and their

possessions have diminished in a still greater proportion. Lazy and dirty, crafty, and generally untruthful, living without a thought beyond the immediate present, capable of well-nigh any crime for the sake of fire-water—to my mind they offer an example of humanity as degraded and loathsome as can be imagined. Employ them in the far wilderness, where no European is at hand to supply them with spirits, and it is possible that they might be found more desirable than Kaffirs for cattle-drivers or horsebreakers; but after making several trials of them myself, and using every effort to keep them sober, I was always compelled to give up in despair.

We stayed in Pniel nearly three hours, our road, after we quitted it, lying across some high bushy plains covered with drifts of loose sand, which tried our horses sorely. Nothing could be much more comfortless than our encampment at night; and we were glad to start off at early dawn next morning on our way to Klipdrift.

The road, which had hitherto been somewhat monotonous, was now varied by little valleys alternating with bushy plains. Steinbocks and duykerbocks also enlivened the scene, and numbers of small bustards gambolled in the thickets that in some places rose from six to twelve feet in height. The gazelles conceal themselves throughout the day beneath the low bushwood, the steinbock (*Tragulus rupestris*) especially very rarely leaving its retreat, except at night or at the approach of danger; it is consequently unaccustomed to exposure to broad

daylight, a circumstance to which I attribute the blindness of nine out of ten of those which have been kept in confinement; with the duykerbock (*Cephalolophus mergens*) the blindness is not so common, as it often issues forth in the daytime in search of food. Practised shots hunt both these gazelles with a rifle, but under any circumstance it requires a very skilful hand to bring down one of the little creatures, which are under two feet high, at a distance of 300 yards.

There are sportsmen, as they call themselves, who hunt these graceful animals with greyhounds—a rough method of torture that has been introduced by white men into all parts of the world. Formerly dogs were only employed by the natives of South Africa in hunting ferocious and dangerous animals, or such as were required for the sake of their skins. Amongst these may be reckoned the South African jackal (*Canis mesomelas* and *cinereus*), the caama-fox, the earth-wolf (*Proteles Lalandii*), and the genet.

The steinbock—or “steenbuck,” as it is called by the Boers—and the duykerbock are represented all along the wooded slopes of the plateaus of South and Central Africa down to the coast by the grysbok (*Tragulus melanotis*) and the small blauwbock (*Cephalolophus cæruleus*); whilst towards the north their place is taken by the orbeki, that are found living in pairs on the plains in the salt lake district, and in small herds beyond the Zambesi.

Travelling here across the wooded hills was a business that in itself occupied all our attention;

for the road was full of stones, just like the dry bed of a torrent, and our waggon was jolted about with such violence that it cost us the life of one of our dogs that was caught unawares under the wheel. It was a relief to find ourselves at the Vaal River ferry, where, for the sum of ten shillings, we were all taken across.

On reaching the right bank of the Vaal, we made our encampment at the foot of a hill not far from Klipdrift. Compared with the other towns in South Africa, Klipdrift may be called pretty. About 150 little houses, built partly of stone and partly of iron, are all that remain of what was once the capital of the river-diggings, which had a population of 5000 or more. They lie upon the slope of some low hills that are scarcely eighty feet above the level of the river-bed, and are covered with countless blocks of dark brown trap.

Coming from the south-south-east, the river here makes a bend to the west, and in various places, both above and below the town, its murmuring stream is broken by a number of little islands, sometimes rocky, sometimes overgrown with grass, and occasionally covered with trees, all contributing an air of pleasantness to the general scene. At the time of my visit tall trees were growing on both banks, the left bank being considerably higher than the right.

The inhabitants of the native quarter of Klipdrift, consisting of Batlapins and Barolongs, are very industrious. The men get their living as day-labourers, while the women earn their share of the

housekeeping expenses by doing laundry-work; and when they are engaged in washing linen on the banks of the river, they give a picturesque and animated character to the scene.

Even the most cursory glance is sufficient to detect the difference between the Koranna and Bechuana races; and there can be no hesitation in affirming that the representatives of the Bechuanas, the Batlapins and Barolongs, are by far the more comely, both in face and form. Varying in complexion from a dull black to a deep brown, their features, if not handsome, could hardly be called plain, whilst the yellow-brown countenances of the Korannas are literally ugly, the eyes being deeply sunk, the nose scarcely developed at all, the jawbone thick, the lips far protruding. The skull corresponds with the ignoble profile, and is small and narrow. The Koranna women, too, are especially disfigured by an awkward gait, which seems to arise from some singular formation of the lower vertebral column. Either their cheeks or their foreheads are usually daubed with red ochre or tattooed with a labyrinth of blue lines; and I have seen many of them with both forehead and cheeks so covered with brown and black streaks that they had precisely the appearance of monkeys.

During a visit to the Koranna quarter I entered one of the huts. The scene was truly strange. In a hollow in the middle of the hut were some glowing embers; in the midst of the embers was a fleecy object, which on a second glance I perceived to be a

lamb in the process of roasting. Two women, naked to their waists, were lounging on some mats smoking. Several children, quite naked, their skins, naturally yellow, begrimed with the blackest dirt, were playing about ; while the head of the family, in the tattered remnants of an old European coat,



INTERIOR OF A KORANNA HUT.

was sitting close to the hearth, stirring the ashes, and intently watching the cooking. All of a sudden he made a very loud smack with his tongue—a signal, I imagined, that the meal was ready, an opinion in which I was confirmed by seeing him

expel from his mouth the lump of tobacco which is never dispensed with except for the purpose of eating. As soon as the lamb had been removed from the fire, and the scorched fleece had been torn off, the carcase was cut up and distributed rapidly in allotted rations. The children gnawed away greedily at their portions, but the elders had knives with which, close to their lips, they cut off morsels of the lump, which was held, one end in the left hand, and the other between their teeth.

Besides the flesh of animals, of which the favourite parts are the entrails and the brains, the Korannas take meal-pap, boiled gourds, and milk; but they hold fish, crabs, and mollusks generally in utter abhorrence. In this respect they are like most of the tribes in the interior, although along the sea-coast many natives have been known who for a long period have subsisted upon fish as the chief article of their diet.

The whole neighbourhood doubtless abounds with many rare species of animals. The valleys, with their rich tropical vegetation, the marshes contiguous to the river, the densely wooded banks, the river-bed, alike where it is stony and where it is muddy, must all be equally prolific; but I am sorry that I had no leisure to make proper investigation. My stay at Klipdrift was necessarily very short, and I could only get a superficial acquaintance with the environs as we hurried through them. But the place is like an oasis in the bare monotony of the South African highland, and would be sure to yield

a rich harvest to any naturalist who could linger there for some time. Even during my rapid transit I observed several interesting kinds of falcons and sparrow-hawks, as well as owls of different sorts, horned owls, dwarf owls, and owls whose special haunts seemed to be hills, and trees, and swamps. I noticed, likewise, several distinct varieties of crows, and in the thickets on the river-bank and near the farms I reckoned no less than five different species of starlings, two of which, one quite small, the other larger with a long tail, struck me as being very pretty. Shrikes abounded, but were even surpassed in numbers by the granivorous song-birds, amongst which were several of the long-tailed finches. Thrushes and other insectivorous birds, such as the wagtail and the reed-sparrow, were likewise to be seen. Of the woodpecker tribe I only noticed two examples, but I saw several of the sunbirds, and a kind of bee-eater, as well as two sorts of kingfishers and cuckoos. Swallows and a kind of goatsucker were occasionally seen skimming along; and in addition to all these there were representatives of nearly all the feathered races of South Africa, especially of the doves, lesser bustards, plovers, ducks, and divers.

Amongst the reptiles, three kinds of land-tortoises were frequently to be turned up between the stones in the hills; they were the common tortoise, the common South African tortoise, and another of a flat shape, with square green marks in the middle of its shell.

Of fish I observed five species, one of which, the South African silurus, with its flat smooth head, is found as far north as the other side of the Zambesi in fresh water as well as in the salt-pans and the salt rivers.

In the neighbourhood of Klipdrift I made an exchange which seemed to me advisable. I bartered four of my horses for a team of six oxen, and although I was a pecuniary loser by the transaction, I could not be otherwise than satisfied when the bargain was concluded, as the horse disease, which rages every year, had broken out in the district, and I had observed several carcasses bleaching in the sun. Had it not been for this disease, I could have obtained a far better price for my horses, but under the circumstances the owner of the oxen hesitated long before he would entertain the proposal for exchange at all. He assured me that I should find the whole six to be quiet and docile, and all that draught-oxen ought to be; however, I soon discovered that two of them were so wild as to be almost unmanageable. My change of team consequently involved me in engaging two additional black servants—one to lead the foremost of the three pairs, another to urge them on by the free use of the whip.

I had no difficulty in finding what I required. In the Koranna village, one of my companions had fallen in with a German, who had taken up his residence there, and I applied to him to inquire among the natives for a couple of strong young men, who would come up the country with me for a few weeks. In

the course of the day he brought me a Koranna lad of about sixteen, and a Koranna half-breed, named Gert, both of whom professed themselves ready to engage themselves to me for the work I wanted. I was to pay them at the rate of 8s. 6d. a week each.

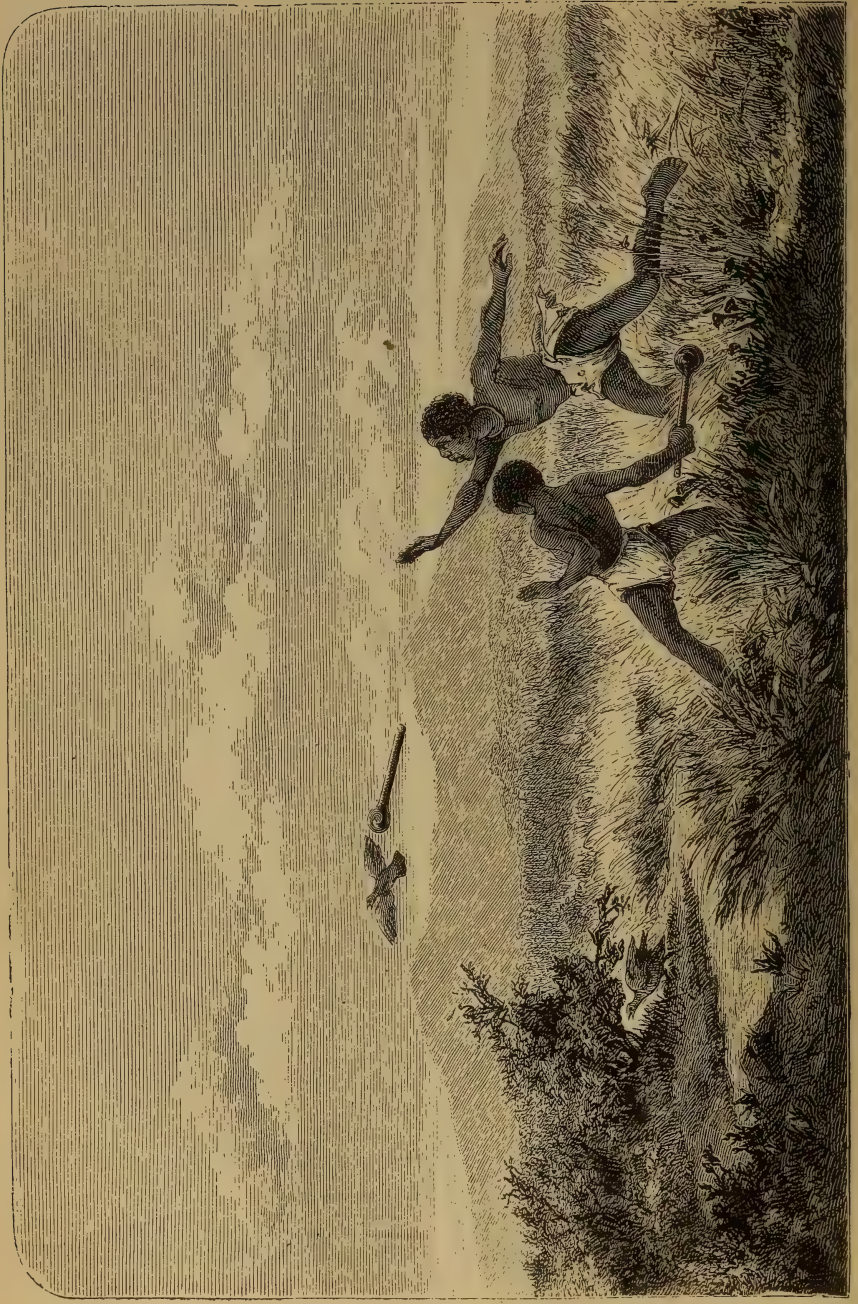
After laying in an adequate stock of tea, sugar, and meal, we left Klipdrift, and, according to my scheme, proceeded northwards towards the confluence of the rivers, to the district inhabited by the western Batlapins—where I wished to explore the deserted river-diggings—taking Gong Gong on the way. The country over which we passed was a high table-land, wooded in parts, and dotted at intervals with settlements, both of Korannas and Batlapins; it was slightly undulated, and sloped sharply down on the west towards the Vaal.

A special interest, both to the sportsman and the naturalist, is awakened by the fact that the district lying between the Harts and Vaal Rivers is the first in which, approached from the south, herds of the striped grey gnu (*Catoblepas Gorgon*) are to be seen. By the Boers called “the blue wildebeest,” and by the Bechuanas known as the “kokon,” this animal ranges northwards all over the Orange Free State, and beyond the Zambesi. It is, although larger, less wild than the black or common gnu, and its horns are of a different shape, being bent downwards and forwards, more like those of our own shorthorns. Huntsmen distinguish the two species by the colour of their tails; the black gnus have white tails, whilst the blue-grey gnus can be recognized at a

great distance by their black tails, and by the black stripes on the upper and front parts of their bodies. They must rank with the springbock and blessbock gazelles, in being the most common game on the treeless plains, from the western region of Cape Colony as far as lat. 23° north.

Late in the afternoon we turned into a small glen, at its opening into the Vaal valley. A few little canvas huts, and some tents, could be seen peeping gracefully from the dark green foliage, and constituted all that now remained of the once flourishing town of Gong Gong.

Hence we proceeded still northwards. Some white specks in the distance, on the steep rocky cliffs overhanging the Vaal, marked the sites of New Kierke Rush, and other places that a few years since had been the prosperous settlements of the river-diggings. The journey from Gong Gong to Delpportshope, which is about a mile from the mouth of the Harts, was one of the most uncomfortable that I have ever made in a bullock-waggon, and I was at a loss to comprehend how, in the flourishing times of the diggings, such a road could have sufficed for the requirements of a population of some thousands. It was no better than the channel of a boulder-stream, and travelling along it was equally difficult and painful. No sooner had one of our back wheels, by the combined efforts of the six oxen goaded on mercilessly by the driver's whip, been dragged out of a hole left by a rain-pool, than one of the front wheels would come in contact with a huge stone a foot high, which it was impos-



BATLAPIN BOYS THROWING THE KIRL.

sible to surmount. To add to our difficulties, the oxen began to be restive, and to get beyond control; and so violent was the jolting, that my barometer was ruined. It was not surprising that the journey occupied about three times as long as we had calculated; nor was it much consolation to perceive, from the fragments of broken waggons which we passed, that others before us had fared even worse than ourselves.

My attention was for a while diverted from my own affairs, by meeting a Batlapin carrying a leveret, and the "kiri" with which he had killed it. This is a very favourite weapon of both the Zulus and the Bechuanas. It is generally made of wood, but amongst the northern Bamangwato it is sometimes formed of rhinoceros horn; it varies from a foot to a yard in length, having at one end a knob, either plain or carved, as large as a hen's egg, or occasionally as large as a man's fist. In hand to hand conflicts it is a very effectual and deadly weapon, but it is chiefly used for hunting, and is hurled, by some tribes, with a marvellous precision. It was with the "kiri" that the Matabele Zulus dashed in the skulls of the male adult population of the rebel Makalaka villages.

The country now sank gradually toward the Harts River, and the valley lay broad and open, bounded on the far north by the N'Kaap, the rocky and wooded slope of the highland. The scenery at the confluence of the rivers had always been described to me as pretty, but I found that the term was only

comparative, the district of Griqualand West appearing to me singularly deficient in natural beauty.

After rushing on their way from the south in numerous rapids, the waters of the Vaal here subside into a broad muddy channel, and flow peacefully on to the mouth of the Harts River, which comes from the north-east. Just before the streams unite, the Vaal makes a sudden turn to the west, and so flows on for a little distance, when it bends away in a south-south-west direction. Where it makes this last bend, the bank of the river is swampy and overgrown by trees, and is the haunt of wild cats, lynxes, and other beasts of prey, besides herds of wild swine.

The southern portion of the right-hand bank is a fertile plain, though it is only close to the river-mouth that trees grow to any considerable size. The upper layer is loam upon a substratum of clay. The opposite shore of the Harts River is much higher, rising in a rocky cliff composed of stratified schist, underlying chalk-beds poor in fossils, and forming the table-land connected with the N'Kaap. This highland descends abruptly to the Vaal River, just above the bend, and is intersected by a glen which lies above 300 yards from the mouth of the Harts River, but which must not be confounded with the Klippdachs grotto, discovered by Hübner. Formerly both shores on the lower part of the river were in the possession of the Batlapin chief, Yantje, who resides at Likatlong, three miles from the right bank, and now receives an annual payment of 200*l.*, as a dependent of the British Government.

Beneath some fine spreading trees at the bottom of the glen our eyes were refreshed by the verdure of a luxuriant sward, whereon we could watch the gambols of the jumping-hares, gazelles, rock-badgers, and wild ducks. The cackle of a chenalopex, a kind



BATLAPIN.

of goose, could be heard as it roosted in the foliage above our heads ; and the rushing sound of a waterfall in the upper part of the glen enhanced the charm of this retired nook. The stream was almost hidden by the bushes, laden with berries, with which it was overhung ; and its banks, which were of sand-

stone, with an upper stratum of limestone, were hollowed out into little grottoes. In the winter season, no doubt, it would be quite dried up, but now it contributed a beautiful feature to the landscape. My delight in finding this charming spot was complete when, at the bottom of the ravine, I discovered a thick layer of fossils of the latest alluvial period, amongst which I picked out a species of tiger-snail.

On one of the trees that overhung the glen I noticed an enormous nest, which at first I imagined must be an ape's; but I subsequently learnt that it belonged to the hammerhead (*Scopus umbretta*), one of the largest nest-builders of the feathered tribe. The bird is about eighteen inches high, and is distinguished by its fine brown plumage, and a long tuft at the back of its head. It generally builds in the forks of trees that overhang precipices or rivers, although it not unfrequently makes selection of the clefts of a rock. The nest may be described as a truncated cone, inverted. It varies very much in height, being sometimes a yard, although sometimes only half as much, from its lower circumference to its upper, which is often as much as six or seven feet. It is a structure equally commodious and substantial; it is entered by an aperture in the side, something less than a foot square, and its interior is generally found to contain a number of bones. Twigs are the chief material of its construction.

This exquisite little spot, so contrasted in its character with its surroundings, might almost fairly

be compared to a diamond hidden in rubble. It must be owned, however, that it was a paradise infested with snakes. I found no less than seven different species, amongst which were two of the cobras that are common throughout South Africa. The first of these I encountered as I was lifting a great stone in search of insects. I did not observe it for some moments, my attention being drawn to a mouse's nest that I had uncovered; but a sunbeam glanced through the foliage, and revealed to me the glistening body of the venomous reptile. Having no weapon at hand, it seemed to me that my most prudent course was to wait quietly for the cobra to make an escape, before I began rummaging the mouse's nest for insects. I had not to wait long, as, aroused by the warmth of the sun's rays thus suddenly admitted, it began to uncoil itself, displaying a body some four feet in length. It quickly caught sight of me, and, in the well-known cobra fashion, having erected about a third of its length it began to hiss violently, the dark neck all the while becoming greatly inflated, and the forked tongue quivering with ominous menace. However, it did not attack me; and something in my attitude, I suppose, making it forebode danger to itself, it presently turned away, and disappeared in the bushes.

Of all the poisonous snakes in South Africa I consider three of the cobras—a green sort, a black, and a yellowish—to be the most venomous. Instances have been known of the first two of these

species making an unprovoked attack upon human beings. One case happened within my own knowledge. A party of Kaffir children were playing near some bushes, about a hundred yards from the huts where they lived, when they caught sight of a cobra creeping towards them. Being aware of its venomous character, they ran away from the bushes with all speed into the road, where, thinking themselves secure, they slackened their speed. Suddenly one of the children uttered a piercing scream. Unperceived, the cobra had followed him, and bitten his heel; in a quarter of an hour the child was dead.

The dingy yellow cobra of the warmer and more northerly parts of Central South Africa, often to be seen in the mapani-woods of the Sibanani plains, exhibits the murderous propensity of its race in another fashion.¹ It will choose a spot where two mapani-trees with their bushy tops over-arch a track by which the wild cattle pass on their way to drink, and rolling its tail firmly round a bough, will let its body hang suspended, straight as an assegai, ready to make its attack at the proper instant. Unlike the green or the black species, its colour is so nearly identical with the tints of the foliage that it is very likely to be unobserved, and, consequently, Europeans may be exposed to a danger against which it is difficult to guard.

Just after my rencontre with the cobra in the glen, on the same day, one of the black boys, who

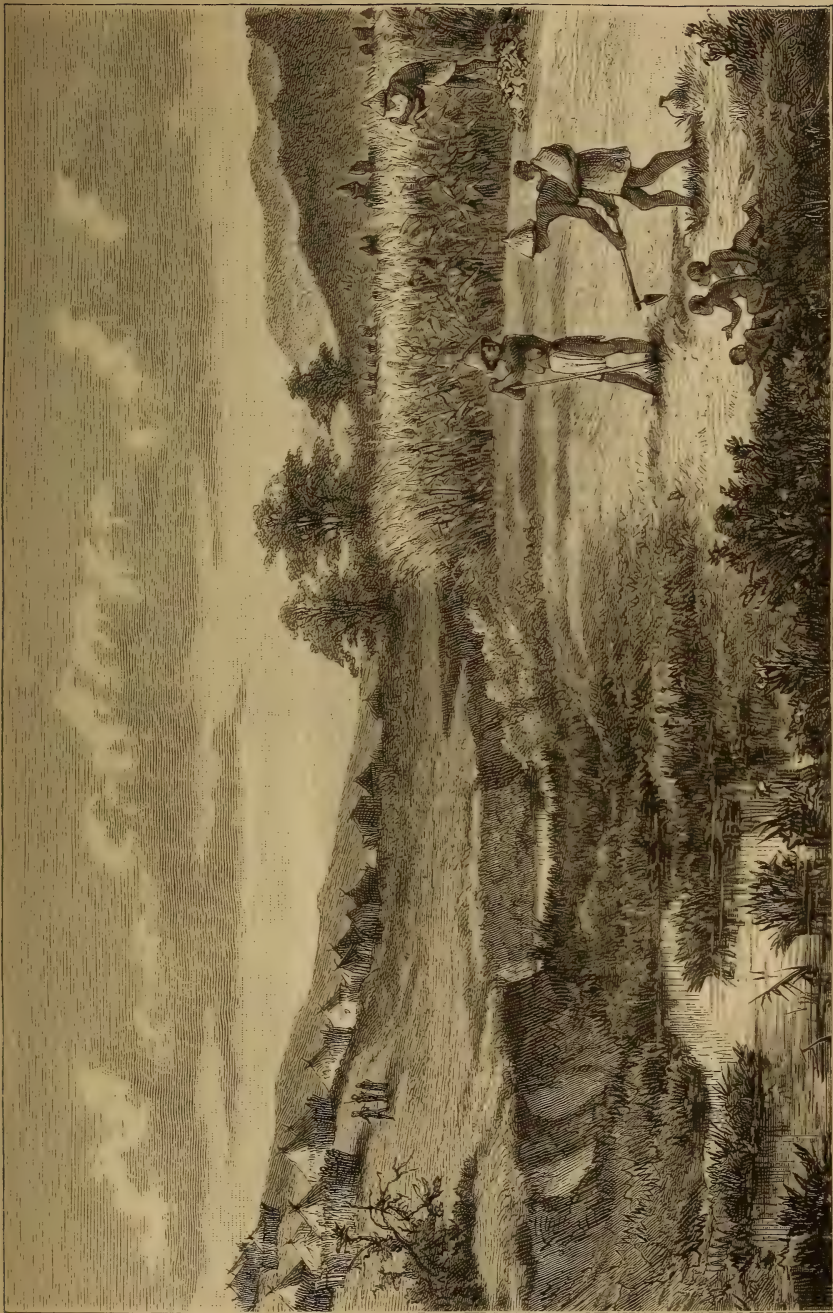
¹ I use the term "murderous propensity" advisedly, as the cobra is quite unable to devour what it has thus destroyed.

was looking for a dove which had been shot, came running to me in a state of great excitement, and calling out, "A slang, sir! a slang!" He had been startled by a cobra in the grass. All the natives, except the Zulu magicians, or "medicine men," are mortally terrified at these reptiles.

Two days afterwards, while I was again exploring the bottom of the glen, I shot one of the short black snakes that are known to the Dutch farmers as "ringnecks," on account of the white mark on their throat. When I told a storekeeper in the neighbourhood that I had done so, he related to me several anecdotes about the species, the particulars of one of which was confirmed by my own subsequent observation. He told me that a few months previously a farmer had noticed, when his cows returned to the farmyard after grazing by the river-bank, that one of them always came back an hour or more after the rest. As there was no danger from wild beasts, it was not usual to have the cows watched; but unable to understand what could be the reason of this habitual lingering of one of the herd, he sent a servant to look. The man soon came running back, shouting, "Bas, Bas, fat det rur!" (Master, master, bring your gun! a ringneck is sucking your cow!). The farmer called together some of his neighbours, and, hastening down to the river-side, witnessed the curious sight of the snake coiled round one of the hind legs of the cow, and while the animal continued to graze quietly, sucking greedily at the udder. It was almost satiated, and its body, like a

great leech, was gradually loosening its hold. Before the astonished spectators could take any measures to destroy it, it had dropped off and disappeared in the grass; but the next day the farm-servants managed to creep up, after it had had its fill, and killed it without injury to themselves.

In the interests of geographical science it was always my wish to ascertain the depth of the various rivers I explored. Having no boat, or other apparatus, my only resource in order to get the measurements I wanted was to wade right into the streams. I persevered in doing this wherever I could feel perfectly secure from the attacks of crocodiles, until an adventure befell me which gave me such a distaste for experiments of this kind that I abandoned them altogether. It was a hazard that almost cost me my life. I was anxious to find a fording-place for the waggon somewhere near our encampment by the Harts River, which, where we were, was some twenty feet wide. After I had found what appeared a suitable spot, where the shore was high and dry, and the water only eighteen inches deep at the edge, I undressed, threw my clothes across the stream to the opposite bank, and then proceeded to wade through the water. At my very first step my foot sank into mud, but I proceeded cautiously till I reached the middle of the stream. I there found myself standing in two feet of mud and two feet of water, and every farther step I took showed me only too plainly that the mud was getting deeper and deeper, and that I could not reach the bottom.



I came to the conclusion that if matters should not improve, I must turn back again; but when I tried to return I experienced unlooked-for difficulty; I kept sinking lower and lower, till only my chin was above the level of the water. To cry for help was of no avail; the waggon in the encampment was much too far away to allow me to be heard. I became quite aware of the peril of my position, but I had only my own exertions on which to rely. With a violent jerk I flung myself forward, spreading out my arms as if I were swimming; the effort brought my body to the upper surface of the mud, but my chest and mouth were under water. I managed, however, by another spring to extricate one of my legs from the slime; but as I was in imminent danger of being suffocated I had to pause, to raise my head above water to draw breath. There was not an instant to be lost if I were to maintain the advantage I had gained, and with one desperate effort more I succeeded in liberating my other foot. Happily I had just strength enough left to enable me to grasp the soil of the opposite shore, and ultimately to drag myself on to dry land. My state, both of mind and body, needs no description.

We remained in our halting-place for several days, before proceeding up the Harts River valley on our way to Likatlong.

CHAPTER V.

FROM LIKATLONG TO WONDERFONTEIN.

Batlapin life—Weaver-birds and their nests—A Batlapin farmstead—Ant-hills—Travelling Batlapins—An alarming accident—Springbockfontein—Gassibone and his residence—An untempting dish—On the bank of the Vaal—Iguanas—Christiana—Bloemhof—Stormy night—Pastures by the Vaal—Cranes—Dutch hunters—A sportsman's Eldorado—Surprised by black gnus—Guinea-fowl—Klerksdorp—Potschefstroom—The Mooi River valley—Geological notes—Wonderfontein and its grottoes—Otters, birds, and snakes.

LIKATLONG, the residence of the chief Yantje, is the capital of the most southerly of the Batlapin tribes. The name signifies "union," probably in reference to the junction of the two rivers. The town consisted of three groups of farmsteads, each farmstead containing from two to four huts, generally six feet high, enclosed by hedges made of dry branches. The huts in the central groups exhibited the greatest appearance of life and industry, and extended as far as the river. In the middle of them was an open space, marked by the ruins of a mission-house that had been burned down some years previously. A short distance from the mission-house stood the church, a long but insignificant-looking edifice, built

of unbaked bricks, with a gabled roof covered with dry grass. At the time of my visit there was no missionary there, but the London Missionary Society, in whose district it lies, have since sent out one of their body.

Seen from the right bank of the river, the town, with its groups of farmsteads arranged symmetrically in rows, looked very neat. The streets, as the open spaces between the enclosures might be called, were full of life; women were hastening down to the water with great clay pitchers on their heads, or toiling along towards their homes breathless under loads of dried grass or brushwood; while children, all naked, were either tending the cattle in the pasture-land, or playing in swarms upon the river's edge. To the activity and plodding industry of the women, the *dolce far niente* of the men offered a striking contrast; as a general rule, they were to be seen idly basking in the sun, like snakes recovering from the exertion of swallowing their last meal.

The jackets and stockings of many of the men were of European make, but some of them had garments of leather, imperfectly tanned; on their heads they had small hats, made of plaited grass or rushes. They were mostly of middle height, neither so tall as the Zulus, nor so powerfully built as the Fingos, their complexions striking me as remarkably clear and bright. Their features are spoilt by the excessive width of the nose—a disfigurement which is to be attributed very much to the use of an iron spoon

for the purposes of a pocket-handkerchief. Most justly they deserved their general reputation for idleness, as, in spite of the natural fertility of their country, they took scarcely any trouble to cultivate cereals, and rarely had any transactions at the Kimberley market.

In a moral point of view, the late war between the English and the Batlaros, a kindred tribe of the Batlapins, has had a very beneficial effect. Previously, especially at the time of the first discovery of the river-diggings, the arrogance of Yantje's demands knew no bounds; and his people were encouraged to make such repeated encroachments into the province, that the British rule on the Vaal River was never perfectly settled. The English victory, however, brought all these disturbances to an end.

After leaving the outskirts of Yantje's town we found ourselves in a part of the Harts valley which was much more lonely, there being no other native settlements of any importance for some considerable distance. The two next are Taung and Mamusa. Taung, not unfrequently retaining its name of Mahura's Town, after a former governor, is about seventy miles from the mouth of the river, and is the residence of an independent Batlapin chief, Mankuruane. Mamusa, the abode of an independent Koranna chief, is another forty miles higher up the river. I did not visit it on this journey, but I was told that the chief's name was Mashon, that he was called Taibush by the Boers, and that he was a very

old man—some saying that he was 112, others even asserting that he was 130 years of age.

Between Likatlong and Mamusa there are numerous insignificant native villages, nine out of ten of them being occupied by Batlapins; though above Taung there are several belonging to the Barolong people, the Korannas appearing only eastward of Mamusa. With the exception of the Koranna villages, they are generally found either on, or only just below the summit of the heights adjoining the river, and rarely contain more than eight farmsteads. Amongst the very few that lie in the valley is Mitzima, the largest of all, containing about thirty huts. The fields and gardens belonging to the people lie partly in the valley and partly on the hill-sides, the crops being kaffir-corn, maize, and sugar-cane, which grows seven or eight feet in height.

All along our way up the Harts valley the numerous defiles crossing our path had compelled us to make many deviations that involved considerable loss of time. We were halting for rest, not many miles from Likatlong, when we were visited by an old man and a youth, who wanted to do a little business with the "makoa," white man. The high prices that they demanded for their goods greatly surprised me, until I found that the natives even of these parts had learnt the value of English money.

As we went on we had several good chances of sport in the woods and long grass of the valley, and in the bushes by the river-banks. Near the river

we found four different kinds of bustards, the two smaller sorts congregating in flocks; the two larger, one of which was of unusual size, rising from the bushes in pairs; and, near the thorns, we saw several pairs of the great cape-partridge scratching up the ground. Sand-grouse, too, were basking on the sandy spots by the shore and on the slopes; the reedy places being haunted by wild ducks, of which we secured a plentiful supply. On the more open spots, where the river was overhung by mimosas, the lovely weaver-birds, yellow, with a black spot on the throat, had stripped off the leaves from the ends of the branches, and replaced them by their wonderful nests, that hung suspended like some curious fruit.

These nests were about four or five inches long, and were constructed in the shape of an elliptic cone, the small end of which was attached to the bough, the transverse diameter being between two and three inches in length. The aperture, on the flat side of the nest, underneath, was crescent-shaped, and only just large enough to admit one bird at a time. The material was blades of grass, collected fresh and pliant, and so cunningly woven together as to give the finished work all the appearance of the best-skilled art. The construction of the nests was so firm that they would defy the most violent storms, but yet they were hung so delicately that the gentlest breeze would put them in motion. As they swayed to and fro they made the prettiest of reflections in the mirror of the peaceful stream, darkened already by its carpet of tender water-plants—a picture ren-

dered still more striking when one of the bright little birds would issue from its home, and, hovering about, would seem to add the radiancy of some sparkling gem. The birds themselves did not show



NESTS OF WEAVER-BIRDS.

any timidity, and towards evening we found that we could take them in their nests, any that we had startled soon flying back and settling down in patient curiosity to watch our movements.

On the third day of our travelling we came in sight of a range of hills to the east of us, running from the south, and projecting some way into the Harts valley. I was told that they were in the district of the chief Mitzima, and that the point at the extreme end was called Spitzkopf by the Boers.

In various parts of the plains we were crossing there were patches of bright red, giving the effect of crimson carpets spread upon the ground. On closer inspection they proved to be masses of free-blooming lilies. Other spots were distinguished by a different species of lily, growing very luxuriantly, and having very dark green leaves, which were perpetually found covered with many varieties of weevils.

Near a sugar-plantation that we passed I saw four women at work; and as we wanted some milk I asked them if they could get some, without my waiting until we reached Mitzima. They all seemed pleased at being asked, and sticking their hoes into the ground ran off, laughing and shouting, to their huts, about 300 yards away. They were not long in returning, two of them carrying earthenware pans, and the third, a lean old hag, bringing a wooden bowl, all full of sweet new milk. The only remuneration they required was a lump of tobacco. I was rather surprised at the choice; but my man, Gert, who acted as interpreter, told me that they were very fond of snuff—an assertion which was confirmed by their taking the tobacco, and after rubbing it in their hands, stuffing it into their capacious

nostrils, chuckling out "Monati! monati!" (That is fine! that is fine!)

In the course of the afternoon we passed a farmstead composed of three huts, which in cleanliness surpassed anything I ever saw amongst the Batlapin tribe. They were built of strong stakes, and were very spacious. Beneath a shed formed of rushes stood a good substantial waggon, and in the courtyard was another smaller waggon, to which the farmer and his labourers were doing some repairs. Besides this I noticed—what was a great rarity in the Batlapin country in 1873—a good, useful plough. Half a dozen leathern milk-bags, too, were hanging in the cattle-enclosure. In the shed, two Batlapin men were busy making a waggon-tilt out of an old piece of canvas; and I do not remember ever having seen any of the tribe working so industriously. Fifteen little black children were playing merrily enough in the immediate neighbourhood of the farm, none of them having the least pretence to clothing beyond a narrow strip of leather serving for an apron; a few elder children were minding the cattle on the river-bank a mile away; and altogether the place had a singular air of comfort and prosperity.

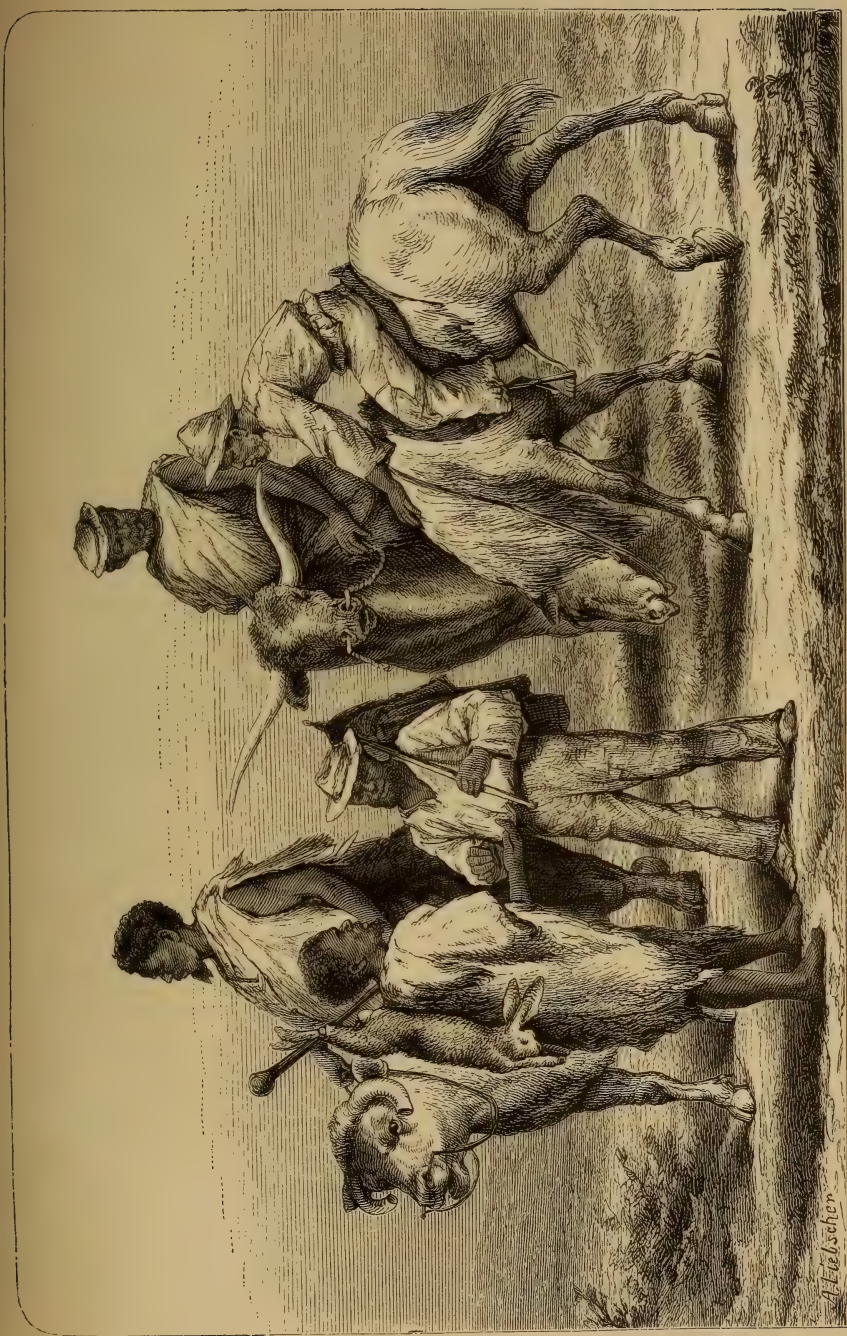
Nearer and nearer we approached the heights that had opened before us in the morning. They were the most northerly branch of the chain of hills beginning near Hebron, on the right bank of the Vaal. I found the geological formation especially interesting, the rocks sometimes standing in up-

right blocks, ranged side by side in pillars almost like petrified human forms, and sometimes lying piled up horizontally, like the steps of a gigantic staircase.

Mitzima's village was on the nearer side of the Spitzkopf. We did not stay long, but started off again late in the afternoon. The number of the glens, however, that we had to cross delayed us so much, and tried the strength of our animals so severely, that it proved impossible for us to proceed far that night, and we came to a halt about a mile and a half short of the mountain-head, not far from three little Batlapin farms. A storm that seemed to be gathering at our back made us cautious in our movements, as we knew that a rainfall of even half an hour would be enough to convert any one of the defiles into a rushing and dangerous torrent. In spite of the evening being so far advanced, our arrival did not escape notice at the farms, and several of the occupants hurried out to pay us a visit.

The night spent here was bright and fine, although decidedly cold. The rocks on the hill-side cast long, deep shadows, falling like phantoms across the plain; the Spitzkopf, like a giant on guard, seemed to keep perpetual watch; while the shrill voices of the Batlapins, chanting their wild songs, echoed from the distance, and completed the weird effect of the general scene.

Next morning, after purchasing some gourds from the owner of one of the farms, we pushed on still to



A. Heilscher

BATLAPIS ON A JOURNEY.

the north. The further we ascended the Harts River, the more fertile we found the country. Nothing attracted my attention more than the small plantations of sugar-cane, but I was surprised to hear that the only use to which the natives put the prolific crop is to cut the lower and more juicy section of the stem into morsels that they can chew.

We had now to travel across a plain devoid alike of trees or shrubs, but where I noticed some ant-hills of a peculiar form. Instead of being of the ordinary hemispherical type, about four feet high, and with two or three apertures, such as may be seen by thousands on many of the South African levels, these were open funnels six feet high, with diameters ranging from three to ten inches long, and made of a kind of cement formed by grains of sand agglutinated by the help of the mucous saliva of the ant. Generally they stood in groups of not less than three, and the soil all round them was quite bare for several feet. Outside these, again, were funnels of the same design, but not yet completed, and consisting merely of a conical pile of earth without the aperture at the top.

About noon we made a halt near the river, but were disappointed to find that the only water we could obtain was from the pools, which were rendered disgustingly foul by the cattle driven into them day by day by the natives. It may well be imagined that the food we had to prepare for ourselves with this water did not prove particularly savoury.

In the middle of our meal some Batlapins, from

the villages on the hills to our right, came riding up. They were mounted on huge oxen; but seeing us, they alighted, and came and sat down near our fire, making themselves at once quite at home. Their beasts, without being unsaddled, stood by perfectly still, as if rooted to the ground.

The appearance of these travelling parties of Batlapins is extremely grotesque. The oxen came scrambling along as if they were running for a wager. A stick is thrust through a hole in their nostrils, to each end of which is tied a thong about two yards long; this is the bridle; a sack or piece of leather girded on the back serves for a saddle; a pair of leather or iron stirrups, fastened to a strap, generally completes the trappings.

Our visitors were very friendly and disposed to be communicative. In answer to my inquiry how far it was to Springbockfontein, one of them pointed to the sun above our heads, and said, "Start your waggons at once, and before yon ruler sinks to his rest, you may draw your water from the stream where the springbocks quench their thirst."

In the neighbouring fields of gourds and maize, I found what seemed to me a good opportunity for enriching my entomological collection, but it ended in a misfortune. I succeeded in finding some fine specimens of tiger-beetles (*Cicindelidæ*), but I was so engrossed in my pursuit that I did not observe that a storm had been gathering, and was quite taken by surprise when the lightning flashed a few hundred yards lower down the stream, and the heavy rain-



ACCIDENT IN THE HART'S RIVER VALLEY.

drops began to fall. I was very soon wet through. Scampering back towards the waggon, I found three of the natives still huddling round the all but extinguished fire, but my own people gone to a little distance to secure some plants that had been left out to dry, and to bring in the guns that happened to be outside against a tree close by. I jumped into the waggon, and almost immediately my friends returned. They handed me the plants all right, and were just passing me the guns, when a flash of lightning struck the ground close behind us; the crash of thunder that followed was terrific. In eager haste to hang my gun in its proper place inside the waggon, I had caught hold of the barrel with my left hand, but the shock of the thunder so startled my friend that he jerked one of the triggers, and the charge of hare-shot with which it was loaded went off. I can remember nothing beyond the glare and the noise and a momentary sensation of pain; stunned by the injury, I lost my balance and fell out of the waggon.

It was at first supposed that I was dead; and most providential it was that the wounds were not fatal. The shot had passed right through my left hand, and grazing my left temple, had pierced the brim of my hat, leaving the holes blocked up with my hair. For two days I was completely blind with the eye, and suffered from acute inflammation in it for more than a fortnight.

A native view of the occurrence should not be left without record. While my friends in the pre-

sence of the three Batlapins were discussing whether it would not be possible to reach Springbockfontein that night, another old Batlapin, who had witnessed what had happened, came up, and addressing one of the three, apparently his son, said, "Go, lad, and look inside that waggon; there lies a Bas dying or dead; he is killed for his wickedness; he was storming against his friends for being so slow in giving him his gun, and the great Morena struck him with lightning and thunder. He fell from the waggon. Never more will he eat his maize or suck his sugar-cane, if he is not dead already."¹

Although Springbockfontein was really at no great distance, my condition was such that it proved quite impossible for us to reach it that night; the suffering that I endured from the jolting of the waggon made us abandon our intention, and after two hours' travelling we halted for the rest which was indispensable. However, next morning, quite early, we accomplished the rest of the way.

Springbockfontein is a settlement of white men, consisting of nothing more than some tents and reed-huts, occupied by four Dutch families, who, apparently, had been driven by debt to flee from their former homes in the Transvaal. I found similar settlements in other Bechuana districts, the occupants supported partly by hunting, and partly by wood-cutting or leather-dressing. As a general rule they appear to lead a miserable existence, and may be said to be about the most uncivilized portion

¹ "Bas," a lord, a master; "Morena" ruler.

of the Dutch population of South Africa; being without the means of procuring medical assistance, their condition when attacked by sickness is very deplorable.

The Springbock streams were quite insignificant, and as they made their way towards the Harts River, they passed through a morass where I found large numbers of the common South African tortoise.

During the morning I had rallied considerably, and determined to proceed up the valley without delay. My plan was to pass through the district under the control of the Batlapin chief, Gassibone, at that time independent; but owing to the wrong directions given us by some Dutchmen at the springs, we wandered on till nearly evening, when two natives that we chanced to meet informed us of our mistake, telling us, moreover, that our only way to get where we wanted was by going right back again to the Harts River. All day long the toil had been very great, the soil in many places being so sandy that it was necessary to give the cattle continual rests to recover from their exhausting labours. The country as we advanced became more and more wooded, covered in many spots with small tracts of camel-thorns. To compensate in a degree for the loss of time, there was no lack of good sport.

Striking next, according to the directions of the natives, right across the woods to the east-south-east, we made for the chain of hills where the principal kraal of the chief was said to lie. The road, I

think, was even worse than any we had yet seen, and it required both skill and vigilance to keep the team from injuring themselves, and the waggon from toppling over. A monotonous bush country brought us to a mimosa-forest, where we met some of Gassibone's people, who took every trouble to explain the nearest way to their chieftain's home. We had to cross a depression in the hills, which brought us to a deep circular hollow; in the background of this, there was a meeting of mountain ridges, forming a number of valleys, in one of which the kraal was situated. As we entered the valley it could not but strike us how fairly it was cultivated.

But it was now growing late. The day had been long and unusually toilsome. We were all fatigued, and I ordered a halt for the night.

After allowing our bullocks to graze awhile, we started off in good time next morning for Gassibone's quarters. The women were already busy at their work; the children, as usual, driving the cattle to their pasture. With fine warm weather, our whole party was refreshed and in the best of spirits.

The full title of this chief is Morena Botlazitse Gassibone. Two years after this time, he voluntarily submitted himself to the Transvaal Republic, and since the annexation of the republic by the English, he has become a British subject. He is said to be addicted to many vices, of which drunkenness is not the least.

The houses in the place were very similar in

character to those at Likatlong, the population being about 2500.

My scheme was now to strike out towards the Vaal River, and thence to proceed north-eastwards into the Transvaal. Uncertain how to discover the best road, I resolved to send to the chief, and ask for a guide. I entrusted one of my friends with the



BATLAPINS SEWING.

message, and told him at the same time to try and procure us some milk. In return for a shilling the negro potentate willingly promised us as many pans of milk as we wanted, and in consideration of another shilling undertook to supply us with a guide, who should put us on our way upon the open plains.

His hut was cylindrical, about sixteen feet in diameter, with a conical roof, the highest point of which was about ten feet from the ground, and supported by a mimosa-stem in the centre. At the foot of this was seated one of the wives of the magnate, dressed in a gown of European calico, and holding on her lap a wooden platter full of a favourite Batlapin delicacy. By means of Gert as an interpreter, the chief invited my friend to partake of the dish, and he, in his desire to be courteous, accepted the proffered hospitality; but no sooner had he discovered what he had taken than he let it fall again; it consisted of dried locusts, the very sight of which was enough to disgust him. On his return, he vowed that nothing should induce him a second time to undertake the office of ambassador to a Bechuana prince.

The inside of the hut was lined with clay, the floor being smoothly cemented; hanging on posts all round was a variety of garments made of the skins of aard-wolves, grey foxes, jackals, and black-spotted genets; opposite the doorway on the main pillar hung an American breech-loader; and on the floor, close to the wall, were beds, formed in the most primitive way of sheepskins and goat-skins.

In the course of the conversation Gassibone expressed his regret that the gourds were not ripe enough to send me, and that he was unable to give me any meat, as on account of the deficiency of water close at hand he had sent all his own herds

to the pastures by the Vaal River. My own observation soon afterwards confirmed what he had said, and I found that there was really no water fit to drink between the Harts and the Vaal. In the settlement itself the stream was so reduced that the spring was always besieged by a crowd of women, waiting their turn to get what supply they could, and when my servant made his appearance they hooted him so lustily that he had no alternative than to make a retreat with his bucket empty. Our only resource was to purchase our water of the women, and to make good the defect by laying in a stock of a native fruit something like a medlar, by which we might at any time temporarily allay our thirst.

Only waiting to procure a stock of maize from some of the people, we were soon ready to proceed on our way. It was our wish to fill all our vessels with water before starting, but the guide provided by the chief assured us that there was no necessity whatever for this precaution, as there would be many available places where we could get plenty as we went along. Naturally enough, we took his word, but found ourselves thoroughly deceived; until we reached the Vaal not a drop of drinking water was to be seen, and for the whole of that day and the following we had to endure, throughout the burning heat, all the miseries of increasing thirst. The country between Gassibone's kraal and the river is an uniform table-land, partly covered with trees and bushes, and partly,

in damp years especially, overgrown with long grass.

Pointing to a tall acacia that stood out conspicuously over the plain to the south, our guide informed us that it was situated beside a rushy spot, which we should reach before sunset, and where there was no doubt we should find water. We did, indeed, reach the place in the course of the afternoon, but it proved a mere dried-up rain-pool, the only semblance of water which it contained being a thick green semi-fluid full of tadpoles, insect larvæ, and infusoria, and smelling strong of ammonia. The very look of it was enough ordinarily to excite disgust, but so intense was our thirst that we ladled out the stuff, teeming with visible and invisible life as it was, into a napkin, and tried to filter it into a tumbler. We managed to get about a glass and a half of slimy liquid which we divided amongst our whole party, but in spite of the craving for more drink, we were not induced to repeat the experiment.

We rested about two hours, and made another advance on our way before camping for the night. As we approached the Vaal, the trees and bushes disappeared, and the grass became shorter, forming excellent pasturage for cattle.

On the evening of the next day, just as the sun was beginning to set behind the Free State shore of the Vaal, a little Batlapin boy, who was tending a lot of goats on the plain, told us that the river was close behind some hills to which he pointed. Look-

ing in that direction we soon caught sight of the huts used by the cowherds who were in charge of Gassibone's cattle.

Beyond a question, the Vaal is one of the most treacherous rivers in South Africa; its banks almost to the very middle of the channel are so soft and slippery, that draught-animals going to drink are liable to sink so deep into the mud that it is impossible to extricate them; in such cases they have been known to die of starvation. Accidents of this kind are especially likely to occur with the aged beasts which, having got knocked-up on the way, are left behind to await their owner's return; this, if he has gone on a business journey, is occasionally delayed for months. I have myself experienced some mischances arising from this condition of the margin of the river.

My people lost no time in going to find out where the Batlapin cattle went to drink, and while they were making their investigation, I took my gun and strolled down towards the water's edge. It was getting dusk, and I was desirous, if I could, to shoot some wild fowl for supper. In order to make as little noise as possible, I walked on tiptoe over the firmer parts of the shore, and whenever the trailing branches obstructed my path, I stooped down gently to remove them. Before long there was a sudden cackling on my left, followed by a sonorous flapping of wings, and two of the wild geese (*Chenalopeæ*) of which I was in search were making their escape down the river. I dropped upon my knee, prepared to fire,

but all at once the feeling came upon me that to break the charming sweetness of the scene by the noise of a shot was almost like a desecration. The placid waters of the stream stretched out towards the west, forming a gleaming zone of beauty; the light of a distant hut came sparkling through the gloom; it could not be otherwise than that, in such association, my memory should recall the picture of another stream, in another land, far away, where I had dreamily passed many and many an evening fishing, and when the light of the window within view had sparkled with the welcome of home. I could not help asking myself whether it was not possible even then that loving parents were thinking of the wanderer who was thinking of them. I was by no means saddened at my reverie; I did not for a moment doubt of a happy return; but I became absorbed in my thoughts, and sat pondering on the past for an hour or more, until the trees on the opposite shore had become obscured in the gathering shades of night.

Darkness had so come on that I had no little difficulty in retracing my way to the waggon. I gave my head a succession of thumps against the projecting boughs of the willows, and kept stumbling over their protruding roots; but I held on my road. Ever and again there was some strange and startling noise; first a herd of monkeys, which had been resting on the tree-tops, disturbed by the owls, would break out into a frantic clamour that would gradually die away into weak

and single notes ; and then a great water-iguana (*Polydædalus*) that had been lurking on the bank in search of mice, after creeping noiselessly to the brim of the water, would plunge in with a sudden splash.

These iguanas are huge lizards, over five feet long, that generally select their habitat by water which, if not always running, at least flows periodically ; they are found quite as often near human habitations as they are in the desert. Their bite is not dangerous to anything that is too large for them to devour, but they have such singular power in their long tails and in their claws, that they are able to catch many aquatic as well as land animals. Motionless as logs, with their eyes continually opening and shutting, their dark brown scaly bodies, striped with green and yellow, being of a colour to escape detection, they will for hours await the appearance of their prey with scarcely a sign of animation. Their food consists of frogs, mice, insects, or any animals up to the size of a rat, or any birds not larger than a hen.

It has been said that they are fond of the crabs that are commonly to be found in South Africa, but I am inclined to think that it is only failure of other food that induces them to drag these crustaceans from their holes, although I have seen such an accumulation of the shells as serves to show that a great many crabs may be necessary to make an iguana's meal. No doubt they are immensely partial to eggs ; and so pertinaciously do they visit hen-roost after hen-roost,

that by mutual consent the tenants of the farmsteads combine in declaring war against them. At the mission-station at Limkana, on the Matebe, my attention was called to the way in which, to gratify this predilection, they will climb up trees in search of nests, after the manner of the land-iguana, which never frequent the water at all. From the southern coast to the Marutse district I found the water species everywhere. In streams infested by crocodiles they live in the rapids, which the crocodiles avoid.

In general appearance the land-iguana is similar to the *Polydædalus*, but it is broader, more unwieldy, and has a shorter tail. It is found on plains, both bare and grassy, in rocky districts, in bushes, and in the forests. It lives upon small birds, mice, rats, centipedes, and many insects, but its favourite food is birds' eggs. Ordinarily it chooses its abode at the top of a tree, and at the approach of danger will clamber rapidly to its elevated retreat, and lie concealed along one of the boughs; if it should be on the ground, it will creep into a deserted burrow, or failing this, it will stretch itself out as if lifeless; but only touch it, and every symptom of inanimation vanishes; it will start up, develop its full length hiss like a cat, and crawl along on the tips of its claws, its form, that appeared thick and stumpy as it was shrinking on the ground, becoming in an instant lanky and thin as a skeleton. In the abdomen of this pachysaurian there is found a

collection of lobulated fatty matter, in which some of the native tribes put great faith as a remedy for certain diseases.

It was very close upon midnight when I found my way back to my people in the waggon; they had been far too uneasy at my prolonged absence to lie down to rest.

A bath in the Vaal was the first business next morning, after which we started in a north-eastward course for the Transvaal. In two hours, a much shorter time than I had reckoned on, we came within sight of several erections on the right; one of these was a long building made of tiles, and covered with iron; another, apparently in danger of tumbling down, had been constructed of lath and plaster; the third was of bricks, with a flat roof. These, with a couple of tents, and thirteen Koranna huts, were all that in 1873 existed of the most westerly town in the Republic, which afterwards, during the disturbances in Gassibone's district, and amongst the neighbouring Korannas, became known as Christiana.

Since that time Christiana has changed greatly for the better, and at present is almost as important a town as Bloemhof, which in 1876 included at least thirty houses. Independently of its favourable position on the direct road between Griqualand West and the Transvaal, it has made a rapid development through the exertions of its chief magistrate, whose acquaintance I had subsequently the pleasure of making. It speaks well for the able way in which

this officer maintained his difficult position with the contiguous unruly tribes, that on the annexation of the Transvaal by the English he was allowed to retain his post.

The river-bank where we made our camp was somewhat elevated, and afforded us a good view of the islands and rapids, which were both numerous. The adjacent scenery is unquestionably very interesting, and a visit to the islands would, to an ornithologist, be well worth making. This was the most southern point where I observed the handsome long-tailed roller.

Leaving Christiana on the following day (March 13th), we proceeded up the river towards Bloemhof. The district between the two towns is one of the most dreary and barren in the Transvaal, and has quite the characteristics of a karoo-plain; it offers a striking contrast to the opposite shore on the Free State side of the river, where wide tracts of acacias and numerous farms are mirrored in the waters.

In the way of game we saw nothing but a couple of springbocks, a few of the very smallest of the lesser bustards, and in the more rocky places some ground-squirrels, and some rhyzœnas, the latter being in considerable numbers, as many as fifteen or twenty from a single burrow. Both of these animals had ventured some little distance from their homes; the squirrels digging for roots, the rhyzœnas for beetles, larvæ, and scorpions. At the sound of our wheels they made off, but at a pace so

moderate, that even with a good start they might have been overtaken by a dog. The ground-squirrels ran away very timidly, keeping their tails erect, and not venturing to look back at what had disturbed them until they reached safe quarters; the rhyzœnas were much bolder, stopping frequently to examine the intruders who had invaded their privacy, and pausing, with their tails uncurled, would snarl savagely, as if in defiance. I saw several varieties of rhyzœna; but only one of the ground-squirrel. Further north, where the prairie-like plains made way for more wooded country, the place of the earth-squirrel is supplied by a small yellow-brown kind that lives in the trees; the flesh of both is eaten by all the natives except the Hottentots.

On reaching Bloemhof, on the afternoon of the 15th, we found that it consisted only of a single street, its environs having a poverty-stricken aspect that was far from inviting; it is a place, however, that has latterly been considerably improved.

Ever since we had left Klipdrift the weather had been remarkably fine, with only a few occasional exceptions; but as we quitted Bloemhof we observed that the horizon was ominously heavy; and, as evening drew on, the rain began to fall, and it became so dark that it was quite impossible to see more than a few yards ahead. I regretted that I had not come to the determination of passing the night in the town.

For a while one or two of us tried to walk in

front of the team, to give confidence to the Koranna who was leading the foremost pair of bullocks by the bridle, declaring every minute that he could not distinguish the path from the ground by the side; but the rain was so drenching, and the wind so pitiless, that we were obliged to give up, and to get what shelter we could in the waggon. After slipping and sliding about for a hundred yards or so more, the bullocks all came to a standstill, and I could not help fearing that we had got on to a declivity, which would lead down to the river; and, knowing that further progress under such circumstances might be dangerous, I came to the conclusion that we must stay where we were until daylight.

Notwithstanding the pouring rain, I went out twice to reconnoitre our situation. The second time I went farther than before, and made a discovery which rather startled me. Not many yards in front of us I observed a large dark spot, which it struck me must be a deep hollow in the ground. I called to the driver to watch with me, and wait for the next flash of lightning, that we might ascertain what it really was. The lightning was not long in coming, and revealed close at our feet the bed of a rain-torrent, that of course went right to the river. Only a few more steps and the consequences must have been most disastrous; for when daylight came, we found that the walls of the ravine were not only very precipitous, but not less than sixteen feet in depth.

Nothing could be more uncomfortable than the night we spent. The rain ceased about midnight, but not till it had penetrated the canvas covering of the waggon, the keen wind all along benumbing our limbs, and making us realize that here, on the tableland of the Southern Transvaal, we were 4000 feet above the level of the sea. Except for the Koranna men, David and Gert, there was no rest to be had; but they were both utterly regardless of the rain-pools in which they were reclining, and slept on soundly till the morning.

The Free State shore of the Vaal is elevated; the parts where it is not entirely wooded being scantily dotted with mimosas. Many of the well-to-do farmers, resident on the south of the river, have purchased as much as 3000 acres of land hereabouts, for the purpose of grazing their cattle during the dry season. They complained bitterly of the number of their foals, calves, and mules that had been killed by the hyænas (*H. crocuta*), and said that they had been obliged to resort to strychnine in order to dispose of some of the rapacious beasts. The son of one of the farmers, named Wessel, told me that he had lost eighteen head of cattle of various kinds during the preceding winter.

One case that occurred was somewhat remarkable. A farm-servant, before turning out two mules, had, for his own convenience, fastened them together by a strap; not long afterwards they were found still attached to each other, but one of them was a mangled, half-gnawed carcass, whilst the countless

footprints in the ground showed what desperate efforts the surviving mule had made to get free from its ill-fated companion. Since then the owner had sent no cattle to the pastures, except cows and full-grown horses, unless they were guarded.

Some miles east of Bloemhof we came to a great shallow salt-pan, which we had seen glistening before us for a considerable distance. It was skirted by a farm, and, as usual, one portion of its edge was overhung by a hill, the adjacent grassy parts being of a marshy nature, that might no doubt be cultivated to advantage.

We now entered upon the south-western hunting district of the Transvaal, that extends in one unbroken grass plain from the banks of the Bamboespruit to the Schoenspruit, and is bounded on the south by the Vaal River, and on the north by the Maquassie heights; it is intersected by a river, and by several spruits that flow periodically, generally running from north to south, or south-east.

Before reaching the Bamboespruit, on the 18th of March, we saw several pairs of blessbock antelopes, and then a whole herd of them; they are so called on account of a white spot (*blässe*) on their forehead, which sets off their red-brown skins admirably; their horns diverge backwards, and are by no means so graceful as those of the springbucks. Altogether, the creatures are more strongly built than springbucks; they do not make the same kind of spasmodic leaps, but on the whole they involve their pursuers in a more protracted chase.

In the long grass a number of cranes were pecking out locusts. As we approached them they made a short retreat without rising high above the ground, and uttering their sonorous note, which might almost be called stately, they alighted again only a few hundred yards away.



CAMP ON THE BAMBOESPRUIT.

Some heavy rain came on, and we were compelled to come to a halt quite early in the afternoon by the side of a pool, a very few miles east of the Bamboespruit. Partly from want of rest, and partly probably from the salt we had taken at the salt-pan which

we had just passed, a general lassitude seemed to have fallen upon our whole party; it was an unhealthy languor, that seemed absolutely to prohibit sleep; and the morning dawned before the rain ceased, and we were able to get a little repose underneath the waggon. To rest inside was impossible, as the evaporation from the damp made the atmosphere all but intolerable. Though jackals in plenty were to be heard quite close to us, we were disinclined to take our guns out of the cases, where they were safely protected from the wet, to get a shot at them; and besides it was very dark. After all, the sleep we obtained was very little, and we were all ready to start again while it was still quite early.

My people busied themselves in making a fire, and meanwhile I strolled to a little distance to get a general view of the plain; bounded by distant heights on the north. The sky was overcast, and the day threatened to be as dreary as the night. My attention was attracted by some very musical notes, uttered, as it seemed to me, by two cranes or storks that were fluttering some 500 yards in front of me. I made my companions listen to them, and they agreed in pronouncing the sound exquisite as the notes of an Æolian harp. It was a matter of considerable difficulty to get Gert, the Koranna lad, to leave his breakfast to attend to what was ^{so} exciting our curiosity; and when he did come he declared at first that there was nothing to see, but after a moment or two he suddenly stooped down,

and seizing my hand, made me bend down to his own level.

“Yes, look!” he said, “look at those two birds settling there; those are the birds that made the noise. They would be great locust-birds, only they have red wings, and black heads and crowns—beautiful yellow crowns.”

This was an unusually long speech for Gert, and he had to pause and refresh himself with a quid of tobacco. He saw our surprise, and repeated the word “crowns,” adding that they were not made of feathers, but of long, stiff, yellow hair.

“In Africa,” he continued, “everybody knows them. The farmers, both in the Transvaal and the Free State, keep them tame.”

“What do you call them?” I inquired.

“Mâ-hems, bas,” he answered; but I could only conjecture that they were a long-legged species of the grey crane, until a few days afterwards, when finding three of them domesticated in one of the farms we passed, I ascertained that they were the crowned or royal crane (*Balearia regulorum*). When I returned to my own country I brought two of them with me, and had the honour of presenting them to His Highness the Crown Prince Rudolph, who placed them in the Imperial Zoological Gardens at Schönbrunn.

Scarcely had we been travelling two hours next morning when we came within sound of a rushing torrent, issuing from a depression that could be distinguished at a considerable distance by its belt

of foliage. The depression varied from twenty to thirty-five feet in depth, and was the channel of the Maquassie River, now swollen by the heavy rain that had accumulated from the neighbouring heights, which bear the same name as the stream. The banks are steep, and the river-course stony, and every now and then there are scraps of picturesque scenery ; but during some of the winter months the flood is reduced to a few mere ponds ; these, however, being deep and rocky, are often tolerably full of fish. The more rugged parts of the shore are the haunts of otters, wild cats, weasels, genets, and other small beasts of prey, water lizards also being occasionally to be met with.

At the ford, which, on account of the steep declivity of the banks, is always awkward to cross—we found the water about three feet deep. Standing on the right bank were some transport waggons laden with goods weighing the best part of three tons. The drivers, fearful of crossing in the present swollen condition of the stream, had left them and made their way to a neighbouring canteen to await the subsiding of the flood ; but I came to the conclusion that we might venture to cross at once, and our waggon reached the other side safely, with no other damage than a slight injury to our cooking apparatus.

It was not midday when we reached the southern slope of the Maquassie heights, that extend hence towards the north. It was a spot where the mineralogist no less than the botanist might find a fine

field for research, excellent specimens of porphyritic quartz being frequently to be secured. Hares and bustards abounded on the plains; and in a pond belonging to a farmer who had settled at the foot of the hills were quantities of black moorhens, divers, wild duck, ibises, and herons.

We received a visit in the course of the afternoon from the farmer's son, who quite astonished me by the dexterity with which he handled my revolver, making shot after shot at a mark with unerring precision.

Towards evening we left the neighbourhood of the farm and crossed a plain on which the grass was some two feet high, affording a safe shelter for game. We had only advanced about six miles since noon; but a steady downpour of rain having set in, we not only thought it best to halt for the night, but were so struck by the abundance of game, that we agreed to stay for a whole day.

The sound of firing roused me betimes in the morning. It seemed to come from the south; and the origin of it was explained by the arrival, while we were at breakfast, of two Dutchmen, mounted on small wiry ponies, and making inquiries about the Bas, the master of the house close at hand. Finding us unable to answer their questions, they drove on to the thatched house, and asked neighbour "Ohm" (the ordinary designation of a Dutch farmer) to lend them a waggon, to carry to their own farm, some miles away, a dozen springbocks and blessbocks that they had killed that morning.

It is the common custom of such farmers as live near towns to leave the heads and the entrails of what they have killed for the jackals and vultures, and to send the carcasses whole to market. Those, however, who reside in more out-of-the-way districts, generally flay and cut up the game into joints, laying the skins out on the ground to dry.

After being dried, the skins are most frequently merely cut into squares, and sewn, ten or twelve together, to make carpets; but in the manipulation of them the farmers are far surpassed by the natives. One use to which they are also put is to make the mountings of the giraffe-hide whips. There is a primitive kind of tanning often practised, the tan being the bark of several trees that grow on the hills, such as the waggonhout-tree, or, failing that, the bark of the common mimosas from the river banks. Those who make a trade of tanning purchase the undressed skins from the hunters; a blessbock skin, which costs three or four shillings, as a rule selling after the operation is complete for about half a sovereign.

Some of the farmers' relatives residing with them manufacture what they call field-shoes, which are extremely comfortable for South African travelling. The soles are made of half-tanned gnu-skins, and the upper leathers of the skins of blessbocks, koodoos, or hartebeests. They may be bought of the makers for about seven shillings, but from the tradespeople in the towns they cannot be procured at less than double that price.

The flesh of these animals is cut into long strips, and either slightly salted, or dried by exposure to the sun; it is brought to table quite hard; when pounded and soaked in butter it has a very delicate flavour; its price varies from sixpence to a shilling a pound, and it is often brought to market in considerable quantities.

Quitting this halting-place, we proceeded to the east. The district that we traversed on our way to the Estherspruit was, if possible, more abundant in game than that which we had left. I counted in various directions no less than twenty herds of springbucks and blessbucks. A short distance from our path a swarm of vultures had settled on a blessbuck that had been shot, the very numbers of the birds being a proof that they must have continual opportunities for a similar repast.

The spruit lay in a kind of trench extending towards the south. As we approached it we could see a white-washed farmhouse peeping out from some mimosas on its margin; we subsequently made the acquaintance of its owner, a kindly middle-aged Dutchman, named Rensburg.

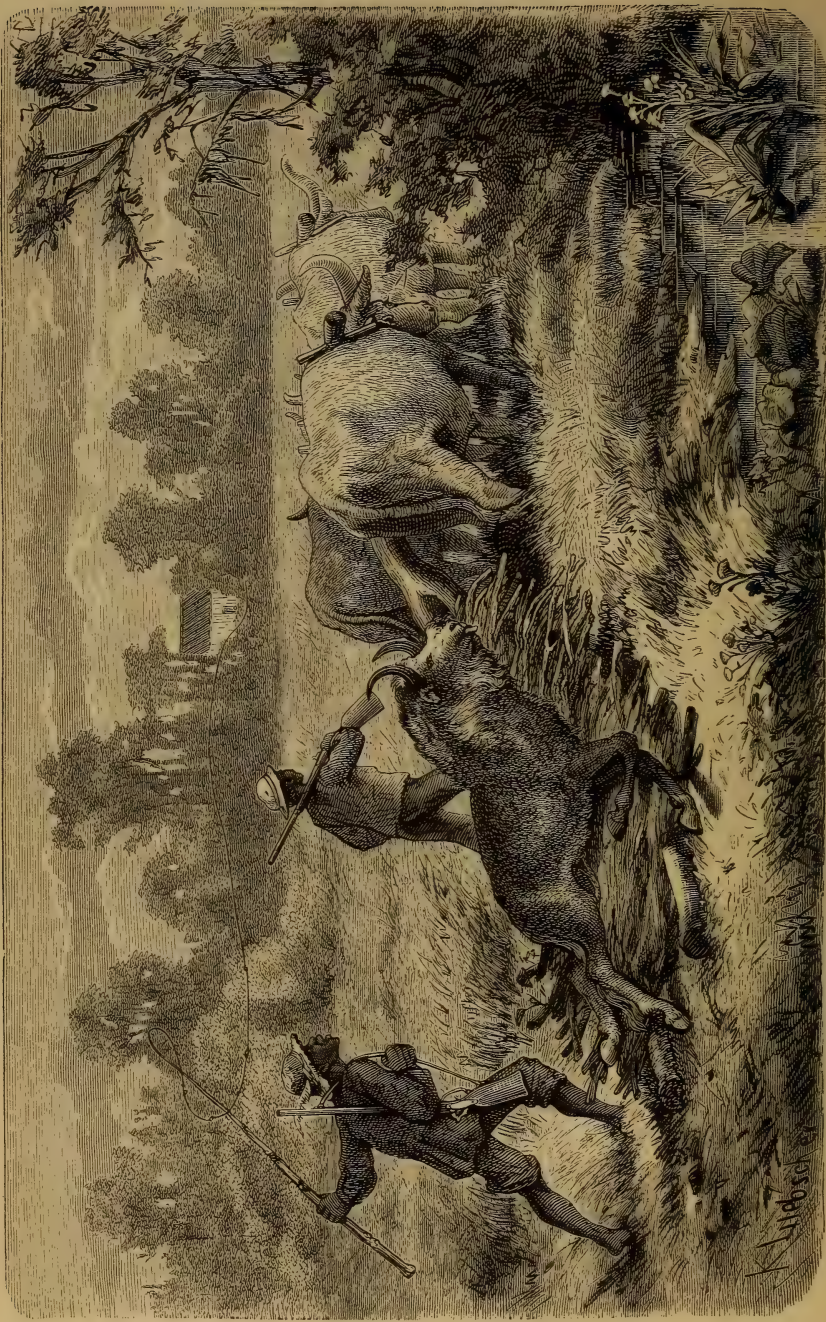
As far as the Estherspruit we had found the road singularly good; but suddenly we were now launched upon a marshy plain, from the mire of which our oxen seemed perfectly unable to drag the waggon. With much reluctance we had to consent to stay in this unhealthy situation till the next morning. Towards midnight the atmosphere became

so clear that we could distinctly see the jackals prowling almost close to us. I was much tempted to have a shot, and to endeavour to get one of their handsome skins. Rensberg, however, had warned me that any firing would be only too likely to frighten away the game, so that I deemed it more prudent to abstain.

On starting next day, we had only proceeded about two hundred yards, when we came upon the Klipspruit, now reduced to a few insignificant pools, although after heavy rain it becomes a stream of scarcely less than a hundred yards in breadth. We crossed without difficulty, and at once made up our minds to encamp for at least a day or two upon the further bank.

It was a scene to rejoice a sportsman's heart; the early morning hours never failed to exhibit many a herd of gnus and antelopes, some hardly a quarter of a mile away, others so far in the distance that they were comparatively specks on the horizon which opened out to the south, east, and west.

The springbocks always grazed in groups; the blessbocks in rows, either side by side, or one behind the other. The prolonged notes of the bustards could be heard on every side, and every nook seemed teeming with animal life. As I looked around me with admiration I almost fancied that I should like to be the owner of some vast enclosure, where the game could find a happy retreat from their relentless pursuers; ample room would be requisite, as it is not so much the climate as the limited space in



RETURN FROM THE GNU HUNT.

zoological gardens that causes so many animals to languish and die in their confinement; but the mortality in gardens is small in comparison with what it is in the travelling menageries, where the imprisonment is necessarily so close that it is to be hoped, for the honour of humanity, that they will soon cease to be supported.

We remained on the Klipspruit from the 23rd to the 27th. Our attempts at sport were by no means successful, and on the last day I determined to make another effort, in hopes of better luck. In going down the spruit I had noticed a spot in the broad part of the bed that had every appearance of being a resort of the game, and the footprints both ways across the channel showed that gnus and other animals were accustomed to pass along that way. Here I resolved to take up my position, and await a favourable chance for a shot.

Shortly after sunrise I left the waggon, and made my way very cautiously along the valley for about two miles; it was necessary to go stealthily, a matter which was sometimes by no means easy, as the river-bed was in places very shallow, and my movements were likely to be observed by the game on the heights; it was consequently past ten o'clock before I reached the selected spot; the place, as I have said, being broader and flatter than elsewhere, and the track overgrown with rushes. After waiting about an hour in the broiling sun, I heard the sound of some shots in the far distance, and being still partially concealed, I peeped out in the

direction whence the reports proceeded; nothing, however, was to be seen but a few herds scattered about, all grazing quietly. Still, it became clear to me that one of the herds of gnus, still feeding, was gradually coming nearer to me; and in the expectation that they might approach within gunshot, I crossed to the other bank, and cocked my gun in readiness; but they were slow in their movements, and scarcely advanced at all. Happening to turn my eyes in another direction, I was taken by surprise. Galloping hard towards me from the quarter where I had heard the shots was a great herd of blessbocks; they were coming so much closer to me than the gnus which I had been watching, that I considered they were giving me the better chance. I had no time to make my way back to the other bank, and had to content myself with gaining the middle of the bed and lying down flat upon the ground. After a few seconds I raised my head, confident that the herd would be now within reach; but I was destined to be disappointed; they had evidently caught sight of me, and were making off in rapid flight. In the rear was a doe with her little fawn that could not keep pace with the rest, and I could not help longing intensely to take them alive; with this design I sent a shot into the right leg of the dam, but although she reared and limped at first, she soon recovered her speed, and made off to rejoin the rest.

Hoping still to succeed with the gnus, I went



STARTLED BY A HERD OF BLACK GNUS.

back to my former place, and again stooped down to wait. I reloaded my gun, but had only just put in the bullet, when I was startled by a great snorting and puffing close above me; the whole herd, with lowered heads and tails erect, was rushing towards me like a whirlwind; another moment and I should have been trampled under their feet, but having no desire to come within reach either of their horns or their hoofs, I jumped up, shouted aloud, and brandished my gun. The effect was to bring them at once to a standstill; they waited a moment with their shaggy heads all turned towards me. I lost not an instant in firing. The foremost antelope bent down its head, brayed aloud, swung round twice in a circle, and then galloped off followed by the entire herd. It did not, however, make straight away, but after retreating some ten or twelve yards it made another circle, still followed by the others, and this manœuvre it repeated several times, until finally, the herd, erecting their white tails, and still bellowing wildly, scampered off to a distance.

While they were making their second circle I took aim at an animal that seemed to be about half grown. My shot was well directed and took effect on the shoulder. I heard the ball strike, but the creature kept on its way just as if it were untouched; so sure, however, was I that I had hit my mark, that I kept on in pursuit, in spite of the intense heat of the sun, for the best part of four miles; my exertions all proved to be fruitless, for although

my victim was probably lagging on behind the herd the distance between us continually increased, and at length, weary and disappointed, I was fain to give up and make my way back to our quarters.

But I was not contented. After resting a little while and taking some refreshment, I started off with Gert, determined, if possible, to track out the wounded gnu. We followed on beyond the spot where I had turned back, and made our way for about another two miles, when we came upon the half-eaten carcase of a young gnu bull. Within five hours after receiving my shot it had become the prey of the numberless vultures that hovered about, and had been so mutilated that it could not be removed.

Disgusted at my failure, I broke up our encampment immediately, and set out once again towards the interior of the Transvaal, where I contemplated making the caverns of Wonderfontein the limit of my present journey, after which I should commence my return to the diamond-diggings.

During our stay by the Klipspruit, I had made a good many additions to my collection, notably a pretty young water-lizard, several kinds of insects and fish, some scolopendra, and various grasses, besides some interesting specimens of greenstone.

It was quite late at night when we next halted for our rest, though we were scarcely more than four miles north-east of the ford. The night was fine and tolerably clear; and as we sat talking over the chances and mischances of the day, we could

hear the bellowing of the male gnus, varied ever and again by the heavy thud that was caused by the clashing of their horns as they met in angry conflict. From midnight to dawn the howl of the jackal and the yell of the hyæna showed that while game was in abundance there was no lack of beasts of prey.

The country through which our next day's journey carried us showed no falling off in the quantity of game. The depressions of the spruits became deeper than we had heretofore seen, and were in some places covered with bushes that were the haunt of the guinea-fowl which are common everywhere, from the southern coast to the further side of the Zambesi.

This breed of wild poultry is undeniably one of the most interesting features of the African bird-world. Hunted perpetually, it is nevertheless ever on the increase. Most frequently it is found in flocks varying from ten to forty in number, in bushy or wooded places near rivers or standing water. It is distinguished from our guinea-fowl by a horny membrane on the forehead.

On the Vaal and its tributaries the best time for hunting guinea-fowl is about two hours before sundown, when they leave the bushes in the plains to drink, previously to roosting for the night in the trees by the banks. This hour may on an average be taken to be about four o'clock in the afternoon, and as the birds nearly always use the same approach to the river, a sportsman, who has con-

cealed himself hard by, will see a cloud of dust gradually coming nearer to him from the land; this is caused by their repeatedly stopping on the way to scratch up seeds and insects from the sandy soil. When in thick grass they continually raise their heads to look around them, and where the grass is over three feet in height I have seen them at intervals run out of it for ten or fifteen yards and fly, or rather spring into the air, that they may be able to look above it. Should they happen to catch sight of man or beast, or anything that has to them a suspicious appearance, they give a loud cackle, and dart off with incredible swiftness. I know few birds that can run so quickly, and when they have once taken to flight, a sportsman unacquainted with their habits has little chance of catching sight of them again that day. An experienced hand, however, will either chase them with dogs, or conceal himself so as to confront them as they rise suddenly from the ground, when their flight is so awkward that they afford a mark which the most unpractised shot can hardly fail to hit. Like other feathered game, guinea-fowl have not much to fear from the natives; the only people that I saw making any attempt to get them were the Korannas, who first make them rise by the aid of their dogs, and then pelt them down with the hard stones of a small edible fruit known as the "blue-bush."

In the afternoon we reached the Matheuspruit, which in spite of the rain was nearly dry. Near

the road a small dam was placed right across its bed, and formed one side of a pond.

From the Matheuspruit the road was in a wretched condition, and where it was not stony the soil was so soft that we were in momentary dread of sticking fast. On the evening of the 29th we reached the Jagdspruit.

The following morning was warm and bright, and the rising sun lighted up the eastern slopes of the Klerksdorp heights, some of which had a conical shape, and stood isolated and bare on the bank of the Schoenspruit, others being covered with bushes, and joined together in ridges. Between us and the hills lay a shallow depression, about two miles wide, that appeared to open into the narrow valley of the Schoenspruit a few miles lower down. We were told that Klerksdorp, the oldest settlement in the Transvaal, was close on the other side of a chain of hills that stretched right across our path.

Tempted by the genial weather I went out for a stroll on the plain, which afforded me ample scope for botanizing. Amongst other plants worth gathering I found a cinna growing rankly as a weed, bearing one or more brick-red or rose-coloured blossoms on stems that varied from four to ten inches in height. From a clump of bushes on the left I took a number of beetles, some small bright ones (*Buprestidæ*), some leaf-beetles (*Chrysomelidæ*), and some Longicorns (*Cerambycidæ*); also several black and yellow-spotted spiders, that, like our cross-spiders, had spun their webs from bush to

bush, and from tree to tree. Two duykerbocks sprung up at my approach, and vanished quickly into the thicket.

Having crossed another depression we soon entered the actual valley of the Schoenspruit, which might fairly claim to be a river, as it is only in exceptionally dry seasons that it ceases to flow regularly, and assumes the characteristics of a "spruit." Altogether it may be considered one of the most interesting valleys in all the South African table-land, being one of the most fertile, as well as the most highly cultivated. Its banks are one continuous series of farms; and both here and in the Mooi-valley the excellent pasturage on the slopes greatly enhances the value of the land. With a little energy and rational manipulation of the soil it might be made even ten times more prolific than it is.

At this period, in 1873, Klerksdorp, or Klerksdorf, consisted of a single street, in which, I believe, I counted five-and-twenty houses. It has since greatly increased, and bids fair, like Potchefstroom, to be one of the most important towns in the south-western Transvaal. Each house had its garden, with peaches and orange-trees, and the hedges were made of quinces and pomegranates. The site of the town is well chosen, being at a spot where the valley is narrowed by hills on either hand, and where the supply of water is abundant; it is likewise partially protected on the side looking up the river by an isolated chain of hills.

Potchefstroom, for which we made a start the

next day, is really the most populous town of the Transvaal. On our way thither we crossed three dry spruits within a distance of thirty-four miles. These were named the Kockemoer, the Matchavis, and the Bakenspruit, and all ran parallel to each other, from north to south, towards the Vaal. The country we passed was more undulating than it had been between Bloemhof and Klerksdorp; all the valleys, whether deep or shallow, appearing very fertile. Before arriving at the Kockemoer we had to cross a tract of land so marshy that our progress was once again a matter of considerable difficulty. The sight of two waggons, already sunk hopelessly in the mire, was a warning to us that we must use every precaution; and in several places, which appeared especially bad, we shovelled out the mud, and filled up the cavity with stones; thus extemporizing a hard road, over which, by dint of much shouting and whipping, we made our bullocks drag their load. Very often, however, it was requisite to make long détours, and even then we found the broad tires of our wheels cutting into the soil as though they were the sharpest of knives.

As we passed next day at the foot of a chain of lofty hills I could not do otherwise than admire the scenery, which seemed the most pleasant of any that we saw throughout the journey. In the shallow glen of the Bakenspruit a large flock of grey cranes was busily hunting for locusts, and we noticed a few springbocks grazing quietly among them.

Thousands of swallows had settled on the swampy spot where we crossed the spruit. The South African swallows are even more confiding and fearless of men than our own swifts; not only will they build in the passages of houses that have continual access to the air, but I have known them take up their abode in dwelling-rooms when these have happened to be left open for any length of time. Their nests are more elaborate than those of the European *Hirundo*, and are entered by a passage sometimes straight, but occasionally slightly curved, a foot or more in length, woven into the nest itself, the whole being affixed to a horizontal roof. Their number, too, as well as the number of the goat-sucker tribe (*Caprimulgus*), is greater than that of the European species, but their notes are neither so strong nor so agreeable.

We were now approaching the valley of the Mooi River, a perennial stream, bounded for some miles on either hand by chains of hills or by isolated eminences. As we turned from a grassy hollow, we saw Potchefstroom lying before us, looking, at first sight, smaller than it really is, the effect of its being built on a level in the form of a long parallelogram, in such a way that it is overshadowed by the trees that line its streets. It is one of the most important places in South Africa, and will probably retain its high rank, as it remains the chief trade-centre of the country, and is hardly likely to be ousted from its prominence, unless it should happen to be affected by the construction of the Delagoa and Middleburgh

Railway from Pretoria. When I was there I estimated the population at about 4000, a total that would be much increased if it were made to include the inhabitants of old Mooi-Riverdorp, a name given to the series of farms that, commencing at the north end of the town, extends for some miles up both sides of the river valley.

The Mooi River encloses the town on the east with a tolerably strong stream and some rushy shallows; the water is clear, and contains many of the same fish as the Vaal, besides numerous crabs; otters, wild cats, and water-lizards are found on its banks. An aqueduct from the river, as well, I believe, as from the hills on the west, is carried round the western side of the town, and from this a good supply of water is conveyed to the houses and their gardens.

In the summer-time grass grows freely in the less frequented streets, and even in the dry season the place with its flat-roofed or gabled houses, all neatly white-washed, rising among the foliage of the foreign evergreens, the cypress, the eucalyptus, and the ivy that have been acclimatized, has all the appearance of one large well-cultivated garden, and offers a striking contrast to the dead yellow of the dried-up grass in the surrounding valley; but when, as on the occasions of my two visits in 1873 and 1874, the adjacent hills and plains are rich in verdure, and the river-banks are brilliant with white and red and yellow blossoms, then is indeed the time when Potchefstroom, arrayed in all its glory,

fairly vindicates its title of the "Flower-town" of the Transvaal.

The streets are straight, dividing the town into rectangular blocks, and at the places where they intersect, open squares are left, the most spacious of which is appropriated for a market-place. The little English church, all overgrown with ivy, is very picturesque, but with this exception none of the public edifices rise above the level of the ordinary style of building. The town is the residence of a magistrate, and of the Portuguese Consul, and it contains several elementary schools. It carries on an active trade with the diamond-fields and Natal, some mills and tan-yards being situated on the outskirts. The produce sent to the diamond-fields consists chiefly of corn, meal, meat, and tobacco; that sent to Natal being tobacco, cattle, skins, and a small supply of ostrich feathers and ivory. It should be added that a large proportion of the goods despatched to the interior from Natal and the diamond-fields has to pass through Potchefstroom on its way.

Although the town has no pretensions to architectural beauty, yet the places of business are thoroughly commodious, and the private residences are often quite elegant villas. The great charm, however, of them all, even of the most modest, lies in the well-kept orchards and gardens with which they are surrounded, the hedges being gay with myriads of roses, with fig-bushes, and with the bright leaves and fiery blossoms of the pome-

granate, which turn to their large and luscious fruit. The whole atmosphere seems pervaded with colour and fragrance, and for many consecutive months of the year a tempting supply of fruit hangs in the hedgerows, so that the owner may gather in their produce without depriving his plot of ground of its ordinary aspect of a gay and enjoyable flower-garden.

Overhanging the brooks that ripple in gutters along the streets, are fine weeping willows, that afford a refreshing shade from the glowing sunbeams; their light green leaves and slim drooping boughs stand out in elegant contrast alike to the compact growth of the fruit-trees, to the dark foliage of the eucalyptus, to the pointed shoots of the arbor vitæ, and to the funereal hue of the cypress.

It was evening when we next started, taking an east-north-east direction, to proceed towards the Mooi. We had scarcely left the town behind us when we began to experience the greatest difficulty, on account of the mud, in making our way over the few hundred yards that led to the primitive bridge across the river.

Our route next morning lay through a wide valley, open in most directions, in which was a farmstead consisting of several buildings, and carefully enclosed by its own fields and well-kept garden. Having here obtained some gourds, we proceeded nearly east, and soon reached a table-land, bounded on the south by a chain of hills partially covered with

trees. In other quarters we had an uninterrupted view of the river-valley with its numerous farms, to be recognized everywhere by the dark patches of cultivated land; in the extreme distance were ridges



NIGHT CAMP.

of hills and isolated heights, and the slope of the Blue-bank plateau; while on the northern horizon we could just discern the outline of the Magalies mountains. It was the finest view I had hitherto seen.

On the table-land that we were crossing, I noticed

some funnel-shaped chasms in the soil, varying from twenty-five to forty feet in depth, distinguishable from a distance by the thickness of the growth of the trees. I afterwards learnt that similar chasms are by no means uncommon in some parts of the Transvaal, between the Harts River and the Molapo, as well as between the Lower Molapo and the Vaal in the Barolong and Batlapin territory; they are found likewise in Griqualand West. These crater-like openings are characteristic of the vast bed of superficial limestone that lies, sometimes indeed only in thin layers, but ordinarily some hundreds of feet thick, covered in some places with sand or chalk, and in others with blocks of granite or slate; they are caused by the union of several deep fissures in the rock far below the surface of the soil. This limestone-bed has a clearly defined stratification; it bears external marks of the action of water, and throughout its extent of hundreds of miles is full of cracks, but so hard is its substance, and so huge is its mass, that in nine cases out of ten the convulsions of nature have not made any appreciable displacement; it is only in these chasms that the effect is at all apparent.

The underground fissures, sometimes several miles long, serve as subterranean channels for the streams, which after a while force themselves out through little rifts into the valleys. This is the case with the Upper Molapo, and in the same way does a portion of the Mooi flow below the surface of the ground, disappearing entirely in places, to reissue

further down the valley. Where, however, several fissures are concentrated at one point, they result in the formation of the craters to which I refer. At the top, these funnels are sometimes as much as 200 or 300 yards in circumference: at first sight they have the appearance of being circular, but



FUNNEL-SHAPED CAVITY IN ROCKS.

on investigation they nearly always prove triangular, or, less frequently, quadrilateral. The interstices of broken rock with which their inner surface is lined are filled up by the surrounding

earth, which thus forms a luxuriant bed for the roots of trees and shrubs, which tower up above, and become conspicuous upon the generally barren plain.

Where the fissures that radiate from the bottom of the funnels are sufficiently wide at the top, it is quite possible to descend perpendicularly for a short distance and to trace their course sometimes for several hundred yards. Many of them are full of water clear as crystal, and one that I saw subsequently, on my way back from my third journey on the Upper Molapo, was full to the depth of 140 feet, so that I might almost feel justified in describing it as a miniature lake.

Although I have not seen Herr Hübner's "Klippdachs-Schlucht," I imagine it must be included in the category of these formations. I found, too, that many small streams in the district of the Vaal, the Harts River, the Molapo, and the Marico, as well as in that of the Upper Limpopo, had their origin in similar hollows in the rock, where the water could not immediately run off, but collected in the funnel until it forced its way through. At most of the farms near such streams we noticed how the supply of water issued from a marshy spot, perhaps a mile or so higher up, and how in the very midst of the springs there was frequently a cavity, perhaps fifty feet or more in depth, that had all the appearance of having been bored in the rock.

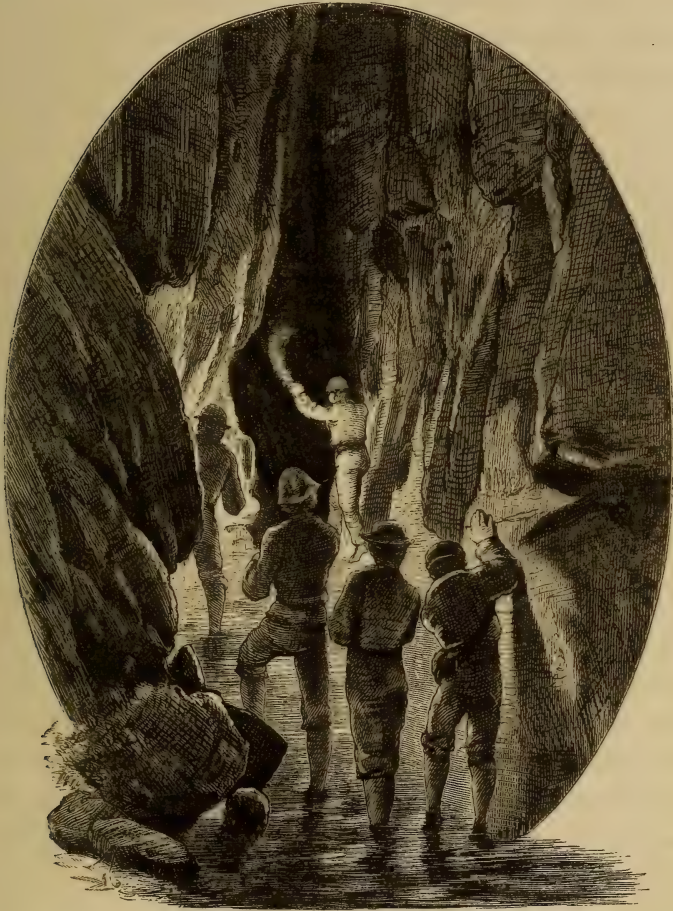
In every place of this character, even where the

water had only a subterranean outlet, I invariably found that there were none but the same species of fish. I know a reedy pool on a plain between the Harts River and the Molapo, abounding with fish and birds, which appears to have no outlet whatever; and having ascertained that its greatest depth is near the middle, I have no doubt but that it is an example of these open funnels in the rock. In the limestone where these singular formations exist, besides veins of quartz and quartzose mineral, there are to be found particles of tin, copper, iron, and silver.

It was on the third day after leaving Potchefstroom that we arrived at Wonderfontein. This is the name by which the Boers distinguish the caves and grottoes of the district, and which does not belong as usual to a single farm, but to a series of farms that with their separate pasture-lands lie along the valley of the Mooi River. The farm-houses are chiefly built of stone, and are buildings of good elevation, each being provided with a waggon-shed, and with one or more rush-huts for drying tobacco, which is universally cultivated in this part of the country. The particular farm to which we were now directing our course was in the immediate vicinity of the "wonderful" caves, and might be termed Wonderfontein proper.

Fed by numerous streams that flowed from both directions, the Mooi River was here of comparative importance; its banks in places were swampy, and overgrown with masses of reeds, yielding an unfaill-

ing source of interest to the ornithologist; and so confusing was the chorus of whistling, twittering, cackling, and singing, that we could hardly fail to be



GROTTO OF WONDERFONTEIN.

puzzled as to where we should give our attention first.

By the permission of the farmer we made our camp

under some weeping willows that overhung his peach-garden. We made many inquiries about the grottoes, and were told that as it was quite easy to find the entrance it was equally easy to miss the way inside, and to fail to find an exit; it was therefore advisable to be provided with guides. This office, we were soon informed, could be undertaken by the two sons of the farmer for the remuneration from our party of 1*l.* a head. Exorbitant as I felt the demand was, yet having come to Wonderfontein for the express purpose of visiting the caves, I submitted to the exaction without a murmur. Some relations of the farmer, who were staying with him on a visit, proposed to join us, and we started without much delay, the two guides each carrying a bundle of tallow candles.

Having crossed the little river by a ford, wide but quite shallow, we had to clamber up the right bank, which was very rocky, and covered with bushwood. A quarter of an hour brought us to a chasm in the rocks, opening almost perpendicularly downwards, and which was manifestly another of the funnels which I have been describing. The entrance to the cavern was a clear illustration of the rending of the rocks, but I must own that I was considerably disappointed with the interior. I had expected to find fossil remains of the late geological period, and thereby perhaps to supply a gap in the geological records of South Africa; but I found nothing to gratify my anticipations.

By the help of the rocks projecting from the sides

of the funnel, we managed to descend to the bottom, which had gradually contracted until it was only a narrow passage slanting down towards, or it might be below, the river-bed. Here we entered upon a perfect labyrinth of fissures, at first so small that we could only creep in one after another on all fours, but increasing till they were frequently ten feet high; they terminated above in mere clefts, from which the water kept dripping, and formed stalactites that were not exceptional in character, either of form or size; they had nearly all been damaged by previous visitors, and the ground was covered with their fragments.

The very multiplicity of the underground passages through which we were conducted, was in itself a proof that the rock had been rifted in all directions, and in many places where the two clefts came into connexion, a sort of vault was formed overhead, somewhat higher than the passages, but presenting no other remarkable feature. The sides were dark grey, generally bare and smooth. The little brook, of which we could hear the sound as soon as we entered, rippled through the caves from east to west, and covered the breadth of the passage, making it necessary for us to perform the best part of our excursion barefooted. As we went onwards, either to the west or north, the water became considerably deeper; we caught sight of some stalactites, glistening and undamaged, just before us, but were prevented from securing them by our guides, who refused to advance a step further.

It would not be a matter of much difficulty to widen the narrow places between the entrance to the cavern and the broader clefts in the interior, so that a miniature boat might be introduced; it would at least make it possible to penetrate to the end of the passages, and might probably be the means of discovering loftier and more spacious grottoes. To me it appeared that away from the river the passages were mere rifts, but that closer to the river they were invariably wider, thus confirming the impression that the water in making its way along them had gradually washed out for itself a larger outlet.

We were not in the caves very long, but found them thickly tenanted by bats, that kept on following us up to the very entrance. Our guides held the fluttering creatures in such abhorrence that nothing would induce them to touch them; they were accordingly much surprised when I captured two of them as an addition to my collection of mammalia, and as a memorial of my visit to the wonderful grottoes.

Wonderfontein is one of those places in South Africa where an explorer may advantageously spend a considerable time, ever finding an ample reward for his labours; the animal, the vegetable, and the mineral world are all well worthy of his best investigation. My own visit on this occasion was necessarily limited to three days, so that I could obtain nothing beyond a cursory glance at the neighbourhood.

Larger quadrupeds have all been exterminated for the last fifteen years, but on the plains towards the north I found numbers of *Catoblepas Gorgon*, *Antilope albifrons* and *Euchore*, whilst the handsome yellow-brown rietbocks, their short horns bending forwards in a hook, were occasionally to be met with, either singly or in pairs, in the long grass or among the rushes on the river.

Our farmer friend was very courteous, and invited us to join his sons on their hunting excursions. Holes recently scratched on the ground bore witness to the existence of jackals, proteles, and striped hyænas; very often porcupines, jumping-hares, and short-tailed pangolins might be seen; and amongst the rocks I found several genets, and a kind of weasel with black stripes.

Once when I was out strolling with one of my people along the far side of the river, we had put down our guns against a rock, and were watching a flock of finches; suddenly my attention was drawn off by a great splashing in the water, and looking through an opening in the rushes, I saw four otters swimming rapidly one behind the other up the stream. Before we had time to get our guns, they all disappeared in the sedge. The brown otters of the South African rivers are shorter and more thick-set than the European species, and their skins are of inferior value; they are to be found in all reedy and flowing streams, as well as in the pools of spruits.

In rapids, and especially in the deep pools

left in the dried-up river-beds, which never fail to abound in fish, they thrive wonderfully, being rarely hunted, except when they are enticed by the sound of poultry to venture near human habitations ; this is of rare occurrence, but when it does happen, they are sure to be attacked and killed by the dogs. They are scarce, however, in all places where the natives have settled close to the river, and find their safest retreat in the south-central, the western, and the northern districts of the Transvaal, where the valleys are marshy and rushes plentiful. I have noticed that they seldom remain stationary, but seek their prey over extensive tracts of country, hunting fish and crustaceans in the shallow pools, rats and mice in the grassy banks, and birds in the morasses and reedy parts of the rivers.

Amongst the clumps of reeds we observed the hanging nests of sedge-warblers, of the bright red, black-spotted fire-finch, and of the handsome long-tailed king-finch (*Vidua Capensis*), one of the largest of the finch tribe. In winter the king-finch assumes a brownish hue, but in the summer its plumage is a rich velvet-black, to which an orange spot on each shoulder stands out in brilliant contrast. The change of plumage is not the only transformation with which Nature during its period of luxuriance endues this charming bird ; its tail, that during the winter is of no unusual length, increases in summer to a bush of feathers eighteen inches long, which so seriously impedes its flight, that in gusty

weather it can only fly in the same direction as the wind.

Like all the other reed-finches, it is a lively little creature, and may perpetually be seen swinging and peeping about on the tops of the reed-stalks, or fluttering over the morasses; and when it seems to consider itself unobserved, it settles down and twitters cheerily among the rushes. If, however, it is alarmed or excited, as it may be by the appearance of another finch invading its nest, by any attempt to capture it, or by the approach of a snake, it becomes perfectly furious; its throat becomes inflated, it spits like a cat, its beautiful neck-feathers bristle up into a perfect ruff, and it prepares to use its sharp beak to good purpose. There are few more interesting birds than this in the whole country.

Long-eared owls, the true owls of the swamps, sometimes flew up as we came near them; but, after a short flight, they would soon alight again on the edge of the marshes. There were a good many kinds of water-birds to be seen, both swimmers and waders; and we noticed several varieties of sandpipers, bitterns, small silver herons, common grey herons, and purple herons; as well as a sort of ruff, some moor-hens, wild ducks and divers. Whilst one of a party in a boat searches for nests and eggs, another may very readily shoot at the birds that are disturbed.

The rich blossoms that abound in the moister parts of the valleys naturally contribute to the

generation of innumerable insects; and as a consequence insectivorous birds, as well as graminivorous, sun-birds, bee-eaters, and swallows swarm about the shrubs both of the gardens and the woods. The multiplicity of insects, however, did not prevent their capture from being a matter of pain and grief; the mosquitoes not only tormented us in the evening, but even stung our faces and hands badly in the daytime.

Snakes, no doubt, were abundant, and I caught one of a variety that I had never seen before; it was dark grey above, and sulphur-coloured underneath, about two feet long, and quite as thick as my finger.

The worthy farmer who owned the place seemed immensely proud of his "wonderlijke chate;" he treated us hospitably, and had always coffee and biscuits ready whenever we called upon him. In the course of conversation he told me that the caves had been visited by a colleague of mine named Mauch, who had stayed a considerable time. He seemed to regret that we spent so much time in collecting vermin, which he called "det slechte chut," when he would have liked to be chatting about the diamond-fields, "Duitsland" and "Osteriek;" but he did what he could to gratify my eagerness to collect any birds peculiar to the locality. He recommended me to conceal myself behind his waggon-shed, and take a shot at a "besonderlik Vogel," that would be sure to settle on a half-dead tree close by; and, taking his advice,

I had the satisfaction of getting a specimen of a small bird of the darter tribe.

Many of the farmers distil a kind of spirit from peaches, which is known in the Transvaal as peach-brandy; it is similar in character, but considerably weaker and cheaper than that prepared from grapes in the western part of Cape Colony, and known by the name of cango.

CHAPTER VI.

RETURN JOURNEY TO DUTOITSPAN.

Departure from Wonderfontein—Potchefstroom again—A mistake—Expenses of transport—Rennicke's Farm—A course of birds—Gildenhuis—A lion-hunt—Hallwater Farm and Saltpan—A Batlapin delicacy—Rough travelling—Hebron—Return to Dutoitspan—The Basutos.

AFTER much enjoyment of the natural objects associated with the place, and with very pleasant recollections of its kindly-disposed owner, I prepared to quit Wonderfontein, which I had determined should be the limit of my first excursion, and to make my way back to Dutoitspan. As far as Bloemhof, I determined to take the same route by which I had come.

Being anxious that it should be by daylight that we recrossed the marsh which we had experienced to be so perilous by the bridge over the Mooi, at Potchefstroom, I resolved to push on all night, with the exception of a brief interval of rest.

During the period of the short halt, I was sitting almost lost in reverie, when I was roused by hearing what struck me as some peculiarly rich notes. One of my people drew my attention to a couple of large

birds, not a hundred yards off. It was too dark to distinguish what they were; and before we could creep near them they had taken alarm and had risen high in the air; but I am tolerably certain that I recognized the deep long-drawn notes, as they re-echoed in the stillness of the night, as the warning cry of the South African grey crane. Notes of this full, resonant character, that seem to reverberate as if from a sounding-board, so as to be audible at an unusual distance, are peculiar to a few kinds of birds, including the swans, which have a hollow breast-bone, through which the wind-pipe curves before ascending to the throat.

On the evening of the fourth day after quitting Wonderfontein, we re-entered Potchefstroom, and made our encampment at the same spot as before.

Several of the residents, with whom we had already made acquaintance, came and paid us a visit in our waggon. They told me that Mauch had stayed several times in Potchefstroom, and had found a liberal friend in Herr Fossmann. In the course of conversation they mentioned that dendrolites and other petrifications were to be found on the mountains that we could see towards the east; and, in answer to my inquiries about the interior of the country, they said that several times a year waggons laden with ivory, ostrich feathers, and large quantities of skins came from Shoshong, the town of the Bamangwatos, on their way to Natal. These waggons came down by the Limpopo, crossing it just above its junction with the Marico. They were the pro-

perty of two brothers named Drake, with whom, on my second journey, I made acquaintance at Shoshong, being called to attend one of them professionally. Among other bits of information that my visitors gave me, I learnt that two men were now staying at Potchefstroom, who had just returned from elephant-hunting in the Matabele country.

I had finished all the sketching that I wanted to do on my way up the valley, and consequently had ample leisure on the return journey for hunting, and for seeking to add to my scientific collection. As we crossed the plain, I took my good pointer Niger with me, and walked on one side of the waggon, at a distance of some three hundred yards. Niger was always of great service to me, and never off his guard in our foraging expeditions. I had brought him from the diamond-fields, on my baboon-hunting excursion. Whilst I kept my distance on one side, one of the rest of us marched along at about the same interval on the other, in the same way as a couple of scouts. The larger bustards (*Eupodotis caffra* and *kori*) were too shy to allow us to come near them, but we had some good sport amongst the grey and black lesser bustards, partridges, sand-grouse, plovers with red legs and speckled wings, and hoplopteri, which seemed to abound chiefly in the more marshy places.

A little incident that amused us as much as anything that transpired on the journey had the effect of detaining us a short time on our way between the Baken and Matschavi spruits. Gert was seated

upon the box of the waggon, and spied out a dark object, about two miles in advance to the left, which, as we approached nearer to it, was acknowledged on all hands to be an animal of some kind or other. Gert and the other native insisted that it was only a cow; but as there was no cowherd in charge, and no other cattle near by, the rest of us came to the conclusion that it could only be one of those old gnus, which, on account of their combative propensities, are from time to time banished from a herd, and thrust out to an isolated existence. We were all of one mind that the animal was of no service where it was, and that it had better find its way to some European museum. Accordingly, I started off, quite intent upon securing the prize. I was beginning to approach with the profoundest caution; but I very soon found that any delicacy on my part was quite superfluous; for before I got within three hundred yards of it, the brute had caught sight of me, and was tearing towards me at full speed. It was a great bull that came rushing onwards, with its huge horns lowered to the ground. I did not lose my presence of mind, but fired a couple of blank shots, which made the animal first pause and then retreat. I had to return to the waggon, somewhat chagrined, it is true, but compelled to join in the general laugh, and to own that the European eyesight was far outdone in keenness by that of the Korannas.

Without any mishap, we crossed the ford over the Schoenspruit, and made our camp on the open sward

between the stream and the aqueduct leading to Klerksdorp. Close beside us were two other waggons belonging to a Transvaal "transport-driver," who came to have a talk with us; and as we were taking a cup of coffee, he joined us at our repast. He told us that to the best of his belief the goods he was conveying included casks of French wine and brandy, jars of hollands, boxes of English biscuits, besides a variety of pickaxes, shovels, and other implements. Altogether his load weighed nearer six tons than five. The waggons had been loaded in the diamond-fields, and the driver's business was to take them to the gold-diggings. He informed us that, after paying all his expenses, he hoped to clear 140*l.* by this journey; so that we inferred that, including the dues paid for unloading at Port Elizabeth, the total cost of the transport of these goods thence to Pilgrim's Rest, in the Lydenburg district, could not be less than 300*l.* It is true that the distance between the two places, *viâ* Hope Town, Kimberley, Christiana, Klerksdorp, Potchefstroom, Pretoria, and Middleberg, can scarcely be less than 1100 miles; but even for this the charge seems very exorbitant. Generally speaking, the transport-drivers no doubt make a good thing of their business; and it would seem to be only in exceptionally bad seasons, or when winter snow-storms on the paroo plains prove fatal to their oxen, that they ever suffer any serious loss.

Next morning we quitted Klerksdorp, proceeding towards the Estherspruit. It had not rained for

some days, and we were sanguine of finer weather ; but the nights were very sensibly colder than when we first started on our expedition.

Our mid-day halt was made, on the following day, beneath the shade of some of those many-stemmed dwarf trees, the branches of which, in complicated twinings, bend downwards to the ground. Immediately below them the soil was almost bare of verdure, and was penetrated by many mouse-holes ; but beyond there were slight depressions in the earth, where the grass grew luxuriantly.

Arriving early next day at the flowery valley of the Estherspruit, I devoted some hours to a search for insects, knowing that many of the smaller coleoptera would abound on the umbelliferous and liliaceous plants. We afterwards all went off in a body, armed with our guns, pincers, and the waggon-whip, to the rocks on the left of the valley. One of the results of this excursion was the capture of two snakes ; and, to judge from the width of the traces that I noticed, I should conclude that there were a good many puff-adders in the neighbourhood. It was precisely the place where they would be likely to thrive, as being haunted by reed-rats—the smaller of a brown colour, the larger of a grey hue with black stripes—as well as by swarms of the striped mice which build in the bushes. Reed-rats are venturesome creatures that from their shape might almost be called jumping-shrews. The largest of them are about the size of a common rat. They live in holes underneath rocks, their food consisting of

insects and larvæ. They are always on the alert, and move very nimbly; but when pursued, they have a habit of stopping to look round them, and this generally results in their being caught.

Although it was late in the afternoon when we reached the Matjespruit, we went on for another three hours before stopping for the night. The first halt next morning was at Klipspruit, where, about a mile and a half above us, we observed a waggon standing, with some horses grazing by its side. Behind the waggon was a tent, and I hoped that we should find we had come across a party of Dutch hunters, from whom we might obtain some fresh meat, in case our own sport should prove unsuccessful. My expectation was not disappointed, and we soon ascertained that the waggon was the property of the landowner, whose farm residence was higher up the valley, but who had brought his family out in this fashion for a holiday, to enjoy a little hunting. Not far from the waggon a number of boughs were stuck into the ground, attached to each other by festoons of bullock-thongs, on which were hanging long strips of meat undergoing the process of being converted into "beltong." On the ground was the carcass of a bull gnu, which a young Koranna was in the act of skinning.

Game seemed to be abundant in every direction. We saw a fight between two gnus. They charged each other with prodigious vehemence; but when they caught sight of us they obviously recognized us as common enemies, and making a truce between

themselves, scampered off with the rest of the herd.

After we had passed the Lionspruit and the Wolf-spruit, the following evening brought us to Ren-nicke's farm, the owner of which had not been over-courteous to us on our outward journey. Now, however, he not only raised no objection to our hunting in his woods, but sent his young son to act as our guide. Conducting us to the edge of the forest, the lad bade us stoop down and follow him quietly. About sixty yards further on we came to a low bank; it was not much above five feet high, and dotted over with a number of dwarf shrubs. The youth crept on very cautiously, and having looked down, motioned to us to follow him noiselessly, and to peep through the bushes. Pointing with his finger over the embankment, he whispered in my ear,—

“Kick, ohm!”¹

I shall never forget the sight. I only wish I could have thrown a net over the whole, and preserved it in its entirety.

The bank on which we were crouching was the boundary of a depression, always overgrown with grass and reeds, but now full of rain-water. In the pool were birds congregated in numbers almost beyond what could be conceived; birds swimming, birds diving, birds wading. Perhaps the most conspicuous among them were the sacred ibises, of which there could not be less than fifty; some of

¹ “Look, uncle!”

them standing asleep, with their heads under their snow-white wings ; some of them striding about solemnly, pausing every now and then to make a snap at a smaller victim ; and some of them hurrying to and fro, dipping their bills below the water in search of fish. On the far side, as if utterly obli-



A BIRD COLONY.

vious of the outer world, a pair of grey herons stood motionless and pensive ; from amongst the weeds rose the unabated cackle of the wild ducks, grey and speckled ; mingling with this were the deep notes of the countless moor-hens ; while an aspect of perpetual activity was given to the scene by the

nimble movements of swarms of little divers. At a spot where the embankment descended sharply to the pool, several ruffs (*Philomachus pugnax*) were wandering backwards and forwards, uttering their peculiar shrill whistle; and large flocks of sandpipers were to be noticed, either skimming from margin to margin of the water, or resting passively just where they had alighted.

The explanation of this enormous concourse of the feathered tribe was very simple. A storm of unwonted violence had washed down from the plain above into the hollow beneath myriads of worms and insects, lizards, and even mice, and so bountiful a banquet had attracted the promiscuous and immense gathering which had excited my wonder.

I suppose that one of us must have incautiously allowed himself to be seen or heard, for all at once a whole cloud of the birds rose above us in the air. Taken aback at the sudden flight, I fired almost at random, and was fortunate enough to bring down one ibis and one moor-hen. As we returned along the edge of the swamp, another of our party shot a wild duck.

On getting back to the waggon, I learnt from one of my people who had not joined us in the excursion to the bank, that the farmer had sent me an invitation to go and visit him. Although he did his best to be kind and hospitable, I found the arrangements of his house, which was built of brick, of the most simple and unpretending order. He complained bitterly of the losses he sustained every year

from the disease that broke out among his horses; his own saddle-horse had not escaped the infection, and he was anxious to know whether I could give him any advice that might be serviceable to him.

We left Rennie's farm in time to arrive about dusk at "Gildenhuis Place," a farm which I have previously mentioned as lying on the southern slopes of the Maquassie Hills.

À propos of these Maquassie Hills, I may mention that on my third journey into the interior, two years subsequently to the present, I met an elephant-hunter, whose home was on their northern ridges; he was a brave fellow, and told me of an episode in his career which I may be allowed to repeat, in association with my own experiences in the neighbourhood.

His name was Weinhold Schmitt, and he had spent his youth on one of the farms at the mouth of the Maquassie River. The northern passes of the hills were being terribly ravaged by four lions, that none of the Boers would venture to attack. At last, one day, a farmer's son, having gone out to fetch home three of his horses, came riding back in great excitement, with the intelligence that he had found their carcasses all lying half-eaten in the grass. The footmarks all around left no doubt that the lions had been the perpetrators of the deed.

The announcement stirred the Boers to action, and they determined to make up a party to hunt them down. Accordingly the farmer and six others, of whom Schmitt was one, mounted their horses;



LION HUNT IN THE MAQUASI HILLS.

the son who had discovered the remains being elected leader. The lion-track was soon found; it led through a valley, across one hill, then another, and finally on to a level plain, where, not only was the grass very short, but the soil was so hard that the vestiges of the beasts could be no longer distinguished. After some hesitation, it was agreed that there was no alternative but to abandon the chase; and it is very probable that most of the party had found their ardour somewhat abated by their exertions, and were quite content to acquiesce in the proposal to return home. They broke up close to Schmitt's house, one of the party remaining behind for a minute to talk. All at once, to their vast surprise, they spied out, close to the farm, a lion and lioness, evidently lurking in ambush. Without losing an instant they rode towards them, their horses behaving bravely in the presence of their natural foes. In order to get a better aim at the beasts when they rose, Schmitt dismounted and led his horse a few steps by the bridle, then raising his gun to be ready to fire, he called to his partner to do the same. On turning his head, however, he found that his friend, instead of following him, had retreated for a good fifty yards, so that here he was alone confronting a couple of lions, with very likely several more in their rear. What could he do but retreat also? As he retired he kept his eye fixed upon the lions, who kept steadily following him, till just as he joined his companion, they suddenly turned tail and made off towards one

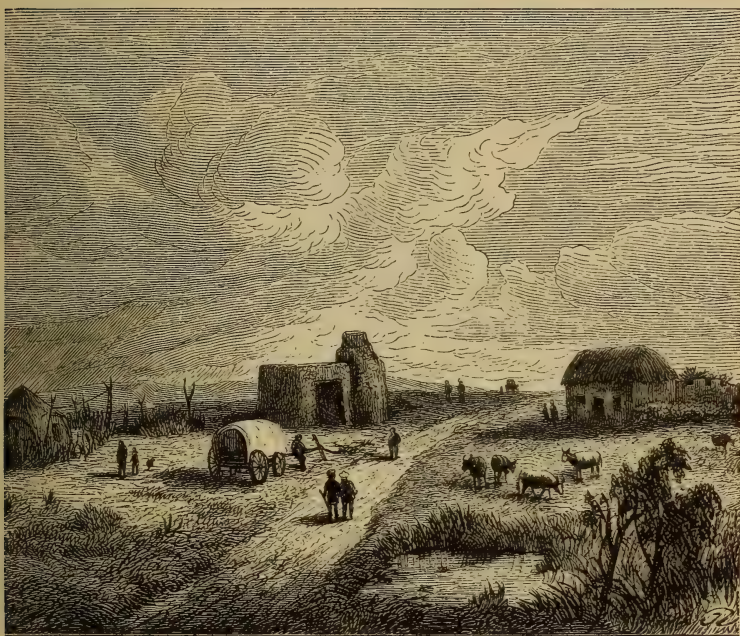
of the rock-funnels where the bushes were very thick.

The rest of the party had hardly got out of ear-shot, and were soon summoned back. Off they started, and determined to surround the hollow, taking especial care to watch the side nearest the hills for which the lions were almost sure to make. After a continuous holloaing and throwing of stones, the lioness was ultimately roused from her retreat. She did not rush straight towards the hills, as had been expected, but took a devious course, which, however, happened to bring her within range of no less than three of the pursuers. Simultaneously three shots rang in the air. Despite her efforts to escape, the lioness very soon sunk to the earth. Every shot had taken effect.

To my inquiry what became of the other lions, Schmitt replied that they withdrew to the district of the Barolongs, and were not heard of again for a long time; but he concluded by saying that even now, in very dry seasons, they will occasionally return from the far west.

It was at no great distance from the Maquassie River that we camped out next day, under the shade of some lovely acacias. The current, which we had found considerably swollen when we crossed it a few weeks before, was now reduced to a mere thread. On the same evening we arrived at the bank of the Bamboespruit, where we spent the night, as we did not care to cross the ford in the dark.

Our progress on the following day led us over the grass plains that I have already described, and past the two farms known as Rietfontein and Coetze's, both situated on the edge of saltpans. Arriving next day at Bloemhof, we stayed only a



HALLWATER FARM.

short time, starting off again for the Hallwater saltpan, thence to take a short cut to Christiana.

In 1872 the saltpan of Hallwater became notorious throughout South Africa, in consequence of the supposed discovery of the ruins of Monomotapa, a town situated in a district of the same name that existed two centuries ago. Old chronicles relate that it

was a domain that included pretty well the whole of South and South-central Africa; and that the population, through the medium of the natives on the coast, kept up an active trade with the Dutch and Portuguese. It was said that Portuguese missionaries from the east had worked amongst the inhabitants, and traditions from the same source represent that the towns were for the most part built near the gold-diggings, and that in the immediate neighbourhood of Monomotapa alone there had been no less than 3000 mines. Discoveries had now been made near the saltpan of some stone fragments of columns and mouldings, evidently bearing the marks of human labour; and as the distance between this spot and Cape Town corresponded accurately with what the records stated was the distance of Monomotapa from Cape Town, the inference was generally accepted that the true site of the ancient town had been revealed.

As the place was only a few miles to the north of my route, I was unwilling to pass it without a visit. It was near the Vaal, and nominally in the Transvaal Republic; but although I found an old Dutchwoman living there with her daughters, I learnt that it was virtually under the authority of the Korannas at Mamusa, a power which they retained until the beginning of 1879. It was just at the southern corner of a triangular tract of country that had its base towards Mamusa and the Harts River, and was claimed by the Batlapin chiefs, Gassibone and Mankuruane, at that time both independent, by old

David Mashon, the Koranna king of Mamusa, and by the Dutch. Amidst the perpetual disturbances that arose between these various claimants, the Dutch farmers who had settled on the land were invariably made the scape-goats.

Producing the best cooking-salt in the Bloemhof



KORANNA.

district, the saltpan yielded an income over and above that derived from the pasturage; so that the old woman who resided in the red-clay cottage with its roof thatched with grass, besides pasturing her cattle, employed several servants in collecting salt. There were a few huts close at hand, and two

holes about twelve feet deep opened the way for a spring, which was conducted by a trench to an artificial pond that supplied the people with their water. The pond, when I saw it, was filthily dirty; there were some red-legged and spurred plovers on its margin, but it was a spot where only tortoises and frogs could lead a contented existence. The foregoing sketch, which gives a fair view of the cottage and the huts, was taken two years afterwards, when I was on my third journey.

Soon after my visit, the white people took their departure, leaving the collection of the salt to the Korannas. To any traveller on his way to the interior, I should give the advice to lay in a good stock of salt at Hallwater; it is an indispensable article for preserving meat, and for preparing skins; there is none so good to be obtained elsewhere; and its price is something over a penny a pound. The Korannas who reside here support themselves chiefly by breeding bullocks and goats, but they find it worth their while to keep a few tumble-down wag-gons in which they may send salt to Potchefstroom, Bloemhof, and the diamond-fields, where they ordinarily sell it at the rate of 1*l.* for a "mute" of 200 lbs.

If a low dam were constructed close to the saltpan, just above the place where the dry channels open, a reservoir could very easily be provided, which would amply serve to irrigate their fields; it would, however, demand something more than Koranna energy to carry out any such scheme,

and it is very unlikely to be put into execution until the natives are debarred from the chance of indulging in the fire-water that paralyzes their faculties.

I had an opportunity during our short stay here of tasting the favourite national dish. Some Batlapins were passing through the place, and were roasting some locusts over red-hot ashes. As soon as they were sufficiently cooked, a good many of the men took them and devoured them entire; others pulled off the feet and the wings; the more fastidious stayed to take out the insides, and it was in this condition that they were offered to us. After partaking of the luxury, I think I may recommend a few locusts to any *gourmand* who, surfeited with other delicacies, requires a dish of peculiar piquancy; in flavour I should consider them not unlike a dried and strongly-salted Italian anchovy. It is only the true South African locust that is available for the purpose of food. I found that I could make a good use of them as fishing-bait, and that they answered much better than earth-worms. Thousands out of the swarms either fall into the rivers where they are greedily devoured by the fish, or are captured by birds of all sorts and sizes, from the tiny fledgling that can scarce hold them in its claws, to the great cranes and eagles that can consume them wholesale.

Anxious to investigate the district as thoroughly as I could, I proposed to reach Christiana by a short cut, and then, turning towards the west, to

regain the road near Hebron, thinking thus to traverse the chief part of Gassibone's territory from east-north-east to west-south-west. There was, however, no proper road in the direction in which I wanted to go, and the bushes not only obstructed our view, but were interspersed with large clumps of prickly acacias. I had no alternative but to acknowledge that my little scheme was frustrated, and to make my way to the Vaal as rapidly as I could.

On our way we saw a good many pairs of the fawn-coloured lesser bustards, and some duykerbocks and steinbocks; the duykerbocks were grazing quietly, the steinbocks only visible when startled from the bushes. There were traces of hartebeests, and of the larger gnus, probably the striped gnu (*Catoblepas taurina*, *Gorgon*), which led us to hope that the animals themselves might not be far off; but we were hardly in the mood either to be very keen upon the game, or to appreciate the beauty of the forest scenery as we otherwise should, because we were undergoing the inconvenience of a total want of water.

We came upon a Batlapin settlement, and, according to the advice of some of the residents who entered into conversation with us, we were to follow a certain footpath, which would lead us to a plain, whence we could make our way without difficulty. During the twenty minutes we rested, we noticed the women making a new hedge of thorns to protect their goats, and the men sprinkling some damp earth

on a couple of roughly-tanned hartebeest skins, to render them supple enough to make up into a dress.

The route we took on leaving seemed to be the most abundant in small game of all parts of Gassibone's territory. Most prominent were the pretty little steinbocks; but we came in sight of



BATLAPINS RETURNING FROM WORK.

three springbucks, which took flight without allowing us to come anywhere within gunshot of them, and a couple of secretary-birds, that were stalking up and down, devouring snakes and lizards, as if it were a solemn duty. Partridges, generally in pairs, were the most plentiful among the birds.

Although I felt the necessity of now travelling on as rapidly as possible, I could not resist the temptation, while I was still in the neighbourhood of the Vaal, to take one day's fishing. We had scarcely chosen our station, and lighted our fire, when the owner of a farmhouse, about half a mile off, came bustling down, and told us that he could not allow us to spend the night there; by quitting the road we had rendered ourselves liable to a fine of 5*l.* to the Republic. I made no remonstrance, setting off at once on our way; but brief as had been our halt it had enabled one of my companions to catch a sheatfish, weighing nearly three pounds, which at our next meal made an agreeable variety to our ordinary *menu*.

We reached Christiana about midnight, and were all disposed to enjoy a cup of tea after our long day's wanderings; but, to our great disappointment, we found that somehow or other the cooking apparatus had all been lost. To myself the loss was especially vexatious, as my money was so nearly exhausted that I could not afford to replace it. One of my friends, however, was good enough to relieve me of my difficulty.

Having spent the forenoon at Christiana, we spent the rest of the day in making our way to the little native kraal that we had passed as we came from Gassibone, after leaving Klipdrift. Hence to the diamond-fields our route would be over an entirely new district, the most interesting part of

which would be in the middle, amongst the hill-ridges by Hebron.

Right to the foot of the hills the country was flat. We passed several saltpans which, though small, had retained their water to a later period than usual, and were even now frequented by wild geese (*Chenelope*) and cranes. The river took a wide circuit towards the left, and it was a stiff two days' journey by which we traversed the secant of the curve. The magnificent grass plain that we crossed belonged already to the Transvaal; that on the other side, which was covered tolerably well with bushwood rising above the tall grass, was at that time claimed by Gassibone; but now both alike are included in the Transvaal. We saw, I think, more bustards than at any place I ever visited in all my travels; before us, behind us, in every direction, far and near, they seemed to swarm.

Taking Gert with me, I went into a wood adjoining our road in search of insects, and found some goat-chafers, as well as two kinds of bark-beetles (*Bostrichidæ*). Here and there we came across some skulls of gnus, sufficient in number to convince me that until quite recently they had frequented the district, though now they have retreated into the interior, and remain in the more northern plains between the Harts and Molapo Rivers, and in the plains of the Klipspruit, which, being more open, are far less favourable for antelope-stalking.

From Bloemhof we had been travelling nearly

parallel to the Free State shore, which, as far as Hebron, is higher than the opposite bank, and studded over with numerous farms. Rather more than eighteen miles from Christiana we came again upon the river, near a canteen where the goings-on seemed more than sufficiently wild and lawless. Here the road divided, one branch leading down the river to Hebron, the other crossing the stream by a passage known as the Blignaut's Pont, being the shortest and consequently most frequented route between the diamond-fields and the Transvaal. Wanting to explore the Hebron hills, as well as the deserted river-diggings adjacent to them, I chose the longer road, aware beforehand that it was also the rougher. Between Blignaut's Pont and Delportshope, near the confluence of the two rivers, there are, both in the main valley and in the valleys running into it, several insignificant villages and detached farmsteads, occupied by Korannas, who are English subjects; the men were to be seen everywhere, either lounging about in tattered European clothes, or sauntering with their dogs among the bushes, while their half-naked children were looking after the meagre herds.

Passing the canteen, we found the country beyond it rather more interesting, as we ever did when we approached the Vaal, where a practised eye will rarely fail to find plenty of sport, and a naturalist is sure to feel himself in an ample field for his studies. At the foot of the hills we came to a building, half hotel, half store, built partly of brick, and partly of

wood and canvas; it stood immediately on the Vaal, which here parts itself into several channels, and flows round a number of islands. It is really a picturesque spot, and is called Fourteen Streams. The Hebron heights commence here, and extend down the Vaal as far as Delportshope, having branches that stretch out towards the north, north-west, and north-north-east, in the direction of the Harts River, one ramification terminating in the Spitzkopf already mentioned, others reaching towards Mamusa and the hills that surround Taung, Man-kuruane's residence. All the range is thickly wooded, and it is intersected by the boundary-line between Griqualand West and the Transvaal; it commences about eight miles above Hebron, a former mission-station in the midst of the diamond-diggings. The formation of the hills consists of what is known as Vaal-stone, being greenstone containing almond-like lumps of chalcedony, covered with quartz-rubble and ferruginous and argillaceous sand. The bottom of the channel is so rocky that the river forms numerous rapids, so that the view upwards from Hebron is very charming; a wide panorama lay open before us, and we could see the hills on the horizon far away in Griqualand West and the Orange Free State, as well as the Plat Berg, a hill 800 feet high, with all its streamlets, pastures, and farm-lands.

But if the scenery was exquisite, the roads were execrable. The only pavement that nature had provided was huge blocks of stone, between which

the rain had washed away the soil and left deep gullies in the path. The waggon was in imminent danger of being overturned every few minutes, and it may be imagined that a progress under such circumstances was little to the advantage either of the baggage or my collection. As for ourselves the jolting was far too violent to allow any one of us to ride inside the waggon. The last hill into Hebron seemed to bring the peril to its climax; so steep was the descent and so sharp the curves that it made, that it was only by our combined efforts that we saved the waggon from being jerked completely over, or the oxen from rolling down the incline.

It was early on Easter Day that we were arriving at Hebron; the weather was cold and ungenial; the sky was overcast by leaden clouds drifted along by a keen south-west wind; it was just the morning to throw a chill over the most cheerful heart. Nor did the aspect of the remains of the once important diggings and station tend to enliven the spirits; ruins they could not be called, for the materials employed were of too transitory a character to allow the dwellings that were constructed to become worthy of such a description. The prospect would have been dreary at the best, but seen through the mists of a dank autumn morning, it was depressing in the extreme. Of the once populous Hebron, all that now remained was a shop or two, an hotel, a smithy, a slaughter-house, and a prison. Crumbling, weather-beaten walls of clay were standing or falling in every

direction, the chaos, however, being of such extent as to demonstrate how large the settlement at the diggings formerly had been. Hundreds of shallow hollows in the ground contributed their testimony to the number of workers who once had busied themselves in searching for the precious crystals. Thousands of tons of rubble were left that had once been grubbed out by mere manual labour, and still attested what must have been the multitude of hands that had sifted and resifted it in eager expectation of a prize; and yet out of the host of diggers perhaps scarcely two succeeded in making a fortune, and hardly one in a dozen did more than cover his expenses.

Not only did Hebron fall to decay as rapidly as it arose; its decline was even more rapid than the fall of Klipdrift, and many other diamond-mines. Its true geological character had been misunderstood. In the alluvial deposit where the diamonds were found, there was to be discerned a variety of particles washed down from the surrounding hills, or from districts higher up the river; besides fragments of greenstone, both large and small, there were bits of quartz of various kinds (milk-quartz, rose-quartz, quartzite, and quartzite porphyry); and besides these again there were peculiar oblong cakes of clay-slate of a yellow or pale green colour, covered with a black incrustation, probably caused by the decomposition of the outer surface; these clay-slate blocks, when broken, exhibited some beautifully-marked colours ranged in concentric bands, and were

erroneously supposed to be the mother-earth of the diamond.

After making some necessary purchases at one of the shops, I found that I had spent all my money except about sixteen shillings ; this was the whole sum with which I was to get back to Dutoitspan, whither it was consequently indispensable for me to make my way without losing an hour. Because it was a holiday, the ferry-man refused to take me across the Vaal himself, and all his men were tipsy ; accordingly, I resolved to try my luck at crossing the river by a ford.

I sent out one of my companions to explore, and he soon returned with the intelligence that he had discovered a practicable fording-place, about two miles lower down the stream. Forthwith we started off.

The proposed passage, as it was lighted up by the rays of the setting sun, looked favourable enough ; but the appearance was deceptive. Though the water was shallow, the current was strong ; the river-bed, too, was covered with rocks, which even in the open road would sorely have tried the strength of our oxen. Before we had got one third of the way across we found ourselves carried considerably below the ford, and our position rapidly becoming critical.

Our black drivers exerted themselves to the uttermost. They shouted, they flogged, they pulled ; but quite in vain ; the oxen were utterly unable to stir, and distressed by the strength of the current,



EASTER SUNDAY IN THE VAAL RIVER.

they began to be restive and to pull at their yokes and bridles. This caused the foremost pair to sink deeper and deeper, and it seemed only too certain that they must be drowned. Prompt action was necessary. I had hurt my hand, and was incapacitated from rendering much help; but I sprang from the waggon, followed by one of the rest; and although we could do nothing to rescue the vehicle from its situation, we succeeded in unharnessing the oxen, who struggled to the opposite side with the greatest difficulty. By the most arduous exertions, we went backwards and forwards, carrying the most valuable part of my collection ashore; but the waggon itself we were obliged to leave, with a large portion of its contents, in the bed of the river, until further assistance could be procured. Our labour entailed such fatigue that before darkness came on we were all ready to drop.

The uncertainty about our waggon and property made us pass an anxious night, and it was a great relief in the early morning to hear a distant cracking of whips, announcing that aid was at hand. Four Koranna waggons, drawn by six or eight pairs of oxen, soon appeared, and made their way quickly to our side of the river. A bargain was concluded, by which our waggon was to be brought to land for the sum of ten shillings, and the manœuvre was accomplished without difficulty or further accident.

On the third day after this exciting adventure I re-entered Dutoitspan. I had been away for two

months; but, in spite of having exercised the strictest economy, my journey had cost me 400*l.*; in fact, rather more. As matter of course, my absence had involved the loss of half my patients; many families had chosen another medical man, and many more, particularly the Dutch farmers, had left the diamond-fields and gone to the Free State. My attendance, however, was very soon called in to some severe cases of sickness, and I began at once to recover my position; and it was not long before I repaid the loan advanced to me for the cooking apparatus by my friend, who very shortly afterwards left Dutoitspan to settle in the colony.

The great object of my journey I conceived to be happily accomplished. I had wanted to gain experience as to the best mode of travelling, and to get some insight into the character of the country, and into the domestic habits both of the natives and of the settlers. I was anxious to acclimatize myself for future journeyings, and the ungenial damp and stormy season had put my constitution to a very fair test. The heavy rains had involved the loss of a good many objects of interest, but I had nevertheless succeeded in bringing back thirty skeletons, about 1500 dried plants, one chest of skins of mammalia, two chests of birds' skins, more than 200 reptiles, several fish, 3000 insects, some fossils, and 300 specimens of minerals, not to mention a number of geological duplicates, which I procured chiefly from the river-diggings to present to several museums and schools in Europe.

It is almost needless to add that on this trial trip I gained many useful hints. In the first place, I learnt that a saddle-horse was indispensable for any future and more prolonged excursion. Continual occasions were ever arising when its services would be most acceptable, either in driving back the draught-oxen that had strayed away, or in exploring points of interest at a distance without bringing the waggon to a standstill, or in getting readily within reach of game. And another thing my experience taught me—I must have much more efficient weapons for my use.

Before setting out, I had made arrangements to retain my little tent-house in Dutoitspan, opposite the court of justice, and thither I now returned. The waggon was pushed up against the back of the house, and the oxen were sold. They brought in enough to discharge my two months' rent, which amounted to 10*l.*, to pay 3*l.* for my servants' wages, and to leave me a little money in hand for my immediate personal necessities.

For the next six months I settled down hard to my practice; and it was a busy time for me. There are very few places in the world where a doctor does not, more or less, become the intimate friend of his patients, and thus finds continual opportunities for an interesting study of character; but in such a sphere of work as the diamond-fields, in their early days, these opportunities were unusually many. Where invalids were often confined to the most limited space—families of tolerable means frequently all

living in a single tent—a medical man, whether he would or no, was brought face to face with the details of domestic life, not only in its brighter, but in its more trying aspect; and in such cases he would ever and again have to become an adviser, an advocate, and sometimes an arbitrator. At times it seemed almost easier to face a wild beast than to speak the proper word of counsel or caution to some self-willed grey-headed man. Prague, with its hundred towers, and the richest practice it could offer, would have failed to give me in years a fraction of the experience that I gained in this brief interval.

Of the thousands of black men who at that time acted as servants in the diamond-fields, the majority belonged to the Basuto, Zulu, and Transvaal Bechuana tribes. They earned from 7*s.* 6*d.* to 10*s.* a week, and rarely stayed more than six months at the diggings; for as soon as they had saved enough to buy a gun—which would seldom cost more than 4*l.*—and about 5 lbs. of powder at 3*s.* per lb., a few bullets and caps, a woollen garment or two, and perhaps a hat, they considered themselves quite in a position to return to their own homes and buy themselves a wife. A servant had to be bound to his master by a certificate drawn up by a proper official, and this had to be renewed at every change of situation, a penalty being imposed when the document was not forthcoming. Whenever a servant wished to complete his engagement, and to return home, the employer, if the man's conduct had



MEETING BETWEEN BASUTOS RETURNING FROM THE DIAMOND FIELDS AND OTHERS GOING THITHER.

been satisfactory, would give him a certificate to the local authorities, that he might be permitted to buy a gun. The certificate was practically equivalent, therefore, to a gun licence; and thus it had been brought about that many hundreds of natives, both in the colony and in their own independent states, were in possession of fire-arms, with liberty to use them.

As the Basutos, whom I have just mentioned, formed in 1872 and 1873 the larger contingent of the coloured labourers, I should like to say a few words about them, thus including them in my general survey of the family of the Bantus.

I divide the natives of South Africa into three races—the Bushmen, the Hottentots, and the Bantus. To the first belong the Bushmen proper; to the second the Hottentots proper, the Griquas, and the Korannas; whilst the third includes the colonial Kaffirs, Zulus, Basutos, Bechuanas, Makalakas, and other tribes, about forty in all; besides which there are transition types between the races, as, for instance, between the Bushmen and the Bantus. It is a subject, however, upon which I have no scope to enlarge here.

Of these tribes, we have already made some acquaintance with the Korannas and two tribes of the Batlapins. The Basutos reside chiefly on the Cornetspruit and the Caledon River, extending thence to the Drakensbergen; they consequently occupy the country bounded by the Free State, Cape Colony, Nomansland, and Natal. Their lan-

guage is called Sesuto. Since their war with the Orange Free State they have lived under English jurisdiction, whilst their neighbours on the west, the southern Barolong, another branch of the Bantus, have become subjects of the Orange Republic.

In agriculture, the Basutos have advanced more than any other tribe. Next to them in this respect come the Baharutse, in the Marico district in the Transvaal, of whom I shall have to speak subsequently, in the narrative of my second journey. The Basuto farms are very small, but they produce hundreds of thousands of bushels of corn, and abound in horses and cattle. There is no doubt that both the Basutos and the Baharutse are yearly increasing in affluence.

Not long ago, when the most southerly of the Basuto chiefs collected all the unruly spirits he could find—runaway servants, thieves, fugitive Gaikas and Galekas, the residium of the last Kaffir war—and attempted to plunder, and to revolt from British rule, all the rest of the Basutos remained faithful, and voluntarily sent 2000 armed horsemen into the field on the side of the English.

With a few unimportant exceptions, the structure of the Basuto huts, and the general character of their work, correspond with those of the Bechuanas, and in their handicraft they are about up to the average of the Bantu tribes. In one respect they differ from the rest of their kin: they manufacture carved wooden fetishes, painting them red and black.

Thaba Bosigo is their most important kraal; Thaba Unshee being that of the Barolongs in the Free State. They have penetrated as far north as the confluence of the Chobe and the Zambesi.



CHAPTER VII.

FROM DUTOITSPAN TO MUSEMANYANA.

Preparation for second journey—Travelling-companions—Departure—A diamond—A lovely evening—Want of water—A conflagration—Hartebeests—An expensive draught—Gassibone's kraal—An adventure with a cobra—A clamorous crowd—A smithy—The mission-station at Taung—Maruma—Thorny places—Cheap diamonds—Pelted by baboons—Reception at Musemanyana.

IN the course of the six months that I now spent in Dutoitspan, I made acquaintance, amongst my patients, with three German families, all nearly related, who were of great assistance to me in my preparations for my second journey into the interior. It was, in fact, owing to the kindness of the head of one of these households that, after I had got together all but 120*l.* of the 900*l.* that the expenses of the expedition would require, I was enabled to procure on credit from one of the mercantile houses of Dutoitspan goods to the amount of 117*l.*, for which I should otherwise have had to pay ready money; thus I was in a position to start four weeks before the time that I had originally contemplated.

My friend Eberwald, after trying his luck as a



A MOONLIGHT EVENING IN THE FOREST.

diamond-digger in the Old de Beer's mine with indifferent success, had returned, and expressed his willingness to accompany me again. He said that he should like to see a bit more of Africa, and would assist me in any way he could. I offered him what he had undertaken before—the supervision of the waggon, an office which he executed conscientiously and well.

It was not by any means my intention that this should be my chief journey. I rather regarded it as a second trial trip, on a more extensive scale than the first. I contemplated making it cover half the distance between the diamond-fields and the Zambesi, but I meant it to be only a further preparation for an expedition right away into Central Africa.

Amongst my patients I had come across a young man, a native of Silesia, who seemed a likely man to assist me, and who professed himself quite ready to accompany my party. He was considerably involved in debt; but in order to secure his services, I became security with his creditors. Finding, however, his obligations all wiped off, he suddenly disappeared altogether. At the time when the diamond-fields were full of doubtful characters, such incidents were by no means uncommon.

There was my other young friend, F., who was quite in the mind to go with us again. My experience of his character rather made me hesitate at renewing any engagement; but yielding to Eberwald's intercession on his behalf, I consented to

give him another chance of showing whether he could be relied on.

As a third associate Eberwald introduced me to a friend of his, Herr Boly, a Hanoverian, of whom he spoke in the highest terms. I was quite ready to attend to the recommendation, and I am happy to add that I never had the least cause to regret admitting him of our number.

A liberal friend had kindly provided me with a team of eight oxen and a Griqua driver, so that on the whole I was far better equipped than on my previous journey. I had also procured a sextant, the use of which was explained to me by an old ship's officer, but unfortunately I was unable to turn either the instrument, or the instruction I had received about it, to much account, as I was baffled in all my inquiries to obtain a copy of the Nautical Almanack.

It was on the 3rd of November, 1873, that our party left Dutoitspan : it consisted of myself, Eberwald, Boly, F., and the Griqua, besides nine dogs, including my faithful Niger, my saddle-horse, and the eight oxen.

I made my way to Klipdrift by the shortest route, designing thence to travel up the Vaal Valley to Hebron, whence I intended to turn off short to Gassibone's town, and continue my journey on to Taung, the residence of the Batlapin king Mankuruane, which I had been unable to reach before. In this way I should explore the right-hand bank of the Vaal in parts that would be new to me,

and I should cross Gassibone's district from south to north, whereas previously I had traversed it from the west, somewhat towards the east.

Our first day brought us to Old de Beer's farm. On the following morning we came to some dilapidated remains a few miles from the site of the mission-house near the station at Pniel, to which I have already alluded. Before beginning to descend to the river, I noticed a depression in the plateau, now transformed into a lake nearly square, and about half a mile across; a number of black storks and cranes were enjoying themselves at the edge of the water. We went on by the road recently hewn by the convicts through the rocks, thus avoiding the loose sand that had given us so much trouble on our previous journey, arriving at night at the spot where, in February, we had endured so much discomfort. To my surprise I found the roads in a much better condition than they were then, and after about six hours' travelling, we reached the bank of the river next morning; but we had somehow or other sustained the loss of two of our dogs.

The water was so low that the ferry-man declined, on account of the weight of the waggon, to take us across the river in his boat, but pointed out to us a ford lower down, by which we could cross. We did not forget our experiences on Easter Day, and accordingly set about our proceedings very circumspectly. The river was now reduced to a channel scarcely twenty feet wide and hardly more than

two feet deep, but although on either side the bed was full of great boulders of greenstone as large as one's head, it was here smooth and sandy, so that we crossed with perfect ease, and made our halt near Klipdrift, on the other side.

While we were resting, Pit, our Griquaman, surprised me by bringing me a diamond weighing about a quarter of a carat. During the time the oxen were grazing he had been lying on the ground rummaging over some sand that had been left as sifted by the diggers, and his trouble had been rewarded by the discovery of the little stone, which I was very pleased to accept as an addition to my collection; but some time afterwards I was grieved to find that I had lost it, when or how I could never tell.

Starting again the same evening, we travelled on till it was quite late, leaving the Vaal, which took a bend to the south-south-east, on our right. The road lay over bushy heights, covered with rocks and crowned with alluvial flats often a mile in length, and separated by tracts of soil of the same character, sloping down towards the river.

About four o'clock on the afternoon of the 7th we arrived at Hebron, but passed on without stopping, as I wanted, while it was still daylight, to reach the spot where we should have to leave the Hebron and Christiana road, and turn off towards Gassibone. Even in the few months since we were here the town had manifestly gone still further to decay. The bad state of the roads compelled us to

stop sooner than I intended, and we did not start next morning until we had met with a young Batlapin, who agreed to act as guide. At noon we took our rest under the shade of a spreading mimosa, after which we made an unusually long march, and encamped for the night in the open plateau.

A landscape of peculiar beauty lay outstretched around us. The Hebron heights and their dark spurs veiled in purple haze bounded the horizon to the south and west, whilst to the north and east the vast plains were shrouded in the distance by a deepening tint, a sure token that the night would be one of those that in South Africa are ever to be remembered for their splendour. A soft air was swaying the flowery grass, of which the seeds had been sown by the wind and imbedded in the soil by the feet of the game. A beauteous tint began to tinge its surface, and soon a gorgeous stream of sunlight broke forth, its golden rays illuminating the far-off east. Was not that the direction of my cherished home? Was it not irradiating the very scenes of my childhood and beaming on the dwellings of my kindred? I sunk into tender contemplation, and our camp, the plain, the watchfire, Gassibone, nay, Africa itself, were all forgotten! It was a peaceful evening, followed by a peaceful night, as if to fortify us for the anxiety which we little expected on the morrow.

The figure of our black driver passed between me and the glowing light, and recalled me to myself.

It was time to retire; the oxen that had been grazing at a distance had returned, and of their own accord had reclined on the ground close to the waggon; spreading out our coverings, all of us lay down upon the grass, and sheltered by its stems and breathing its fragrance, we were soon enjoying our well-earned slumber.

In good time next morning we were again on our way. Judging from what the guide told me, I reckoned that the distance to Gassibone's quarters must be about thirty-five miles, but I was somewhat disconcerted on hearing that on our way we should find water extremely scarce. It was some satisfaction to know that we had a sufficient supply for our midday meal, but any intermediate draught to quench our thirst between times, was not to be thought of.

Proceeding east by north we soon came to a region where we could well believe our guide when he told us that not a drop of rain had fallen for months, and the further we advanced the more parched and yellow did the grass become; though the spring was coming on, we saw but few sprouting blades, and as we went on we found fewer still; the young leaves of the amaryllis, too, that had sprung up here and there, were quite withered by the drought.

A gradual ascent led us up a small plateau, vegetation still becoming more and more scanty. A light breeze swayed the tall dry grass-stems like a field of corn and was hailed by us with delight as

it moderated the heat, and gave a sort of freshness to our fevered lips. The oxen had not tasted water for thirty hours; their languor was excessive, and up hill they could only climb at a snail's pace. For two hours we patiently followed the footpath, our guide informing us that when we reached the highest point of the ascent, we should have to bend a little to the right, and should then come upon some wheel-tracks made by the waggons loaded with wood, which the morena (king) would generally allow to pass through his territory to the diamond-fields. By following these tracks, always keeping to the left, and travelling without stopping, we might perhaps reach some native huts in the course of the night. It could not be said that the communication was very encouraging.

We were obliged to take a short rest, and while we were looking about us, we noticed a thick cloud overhanging the plains. Every one, natives included, settled that it was a huge swarm of locusts. I was occupied with my own matters, and soon forgot all about it. A sudden cry from one of the people in the wagon very shortly afterwards recalled my attention to what we had seen, and on looking again I beheld a sight that could not fail to fill me with amazement and alarm. The plain right in front of us, over which we were on the point of passing, was one sheet of flame. The cloud that we had observed turned out to be a volume of smoke rising above the bushwood, that was all on fire. The conflagration was perhaps five miles from us,

but it was exactly across our path, and we might well feel dismayed.

The first among us to regain composure was our temporary guide, who pointed out that the waggon-tracks of which he had spoken were hardly twenty yards ahead; at least, we could reach them. We looked to the right; we looked to the left: on the right the ground was level, but it only led to a chain of hills, the base of which was already licked by the flames; on the left was a hollow which was just beginning to catch fire, and beyond it a little hillock some forty feet high. Our perplexities seemed only to increase; the oxen were too weary to allow us for one moment to think of retreating; they could not hold out for a mile; and yet something must be done; the fire was manifestly advancing in our very face. We discussed the possibility of setting fire to the bushwood close in front of us, and thus, as it were, forestalling the flames; but the scheme was not to be thought of; the waggon, which contained some thousands of cartridges, 300lbs. of gunpowder, besides a quantity of spirits, was already so heated by the sun that we could scarcely lay our hands upon it; a single spark of fire would in an instant involve it in complete destruction, and the risk was too great.

My eye still rested upon the little hill. I saw that the wind was blowing the flames in a direction away from it, and aware that delay would be fatal, and that some action must be taken, I gave my



THE PLAINS ON FIBE.

decision that at all hazards we must make for it. Every one agreed that I was right, and, rushing to their posts, did what they could to urge on the bullocks without a moment's loss of time. Mounting my horse, I hurried on in front, but on reaching the hollow that had to be crossed before the place of safety upon the hill could be gained, I almost gave a cry of despair on seeing its character; it was not only overgrown with bushwood and very steep, but was strewn in all directions with huge blocks of stone: if only the waggon-wheel should strike against one of these, who could doubt the consequences?

With all his might, Boly cracked his whip and shouted vigorously, and succeeded in making the oxen drag the waggon with unexpected speed; they were all flecked with foam as they pulled their oscillating load behind them; every moment it seemed as if it must overbalance. At the bottom of the hollow it was absolutely necessary to take a rest; the beasts must have time to recover from their exertions; they were all more or less torn by the bushes, and my friends, too, were much scratched about the hands and face. The heat was becoming intense. My horse was not naturally a nervous animal; but it trembled till it could hardly stand, and the hardest part of our struggle had yet to come.

A flake of fire fell within fifteen yards of us, and warned us that it was time to be on the move. "Hulloh an! Hulloh an!" roared the driver, and

the bullocks once again strained themselves to their work. Scarcely, however, had they gone ten paces, when the smoke puffed against their eyes, and all bewildered, they swerved into a track where the waggon must inevitably have been overturned; it was a critical moment, but happily one of my party, who was walking at my side, saw the danger, and, rushing at the heads of the leaders, turned them by a desperate effort into the right direction. The instinct of self-preservation now redoubled every one's efforts; onwards we pushed, through clouds of smoke, amidst falling ashes, amongst fragments of red-hot bark, till we were within fifty yards of the place of safety. So heated was the atmosphere, that I momentarily expected to see the canvas of the waggon break out into a blaze.

The bullocks once more gasped and tottered beneath their yoke; with painful toil they made their way for another thirty yards; it was doubtful whether they could accomplish the remaining twenty.

One more moment of rest, followed by one more frantic paroxysm of exertion, and all was safe! Just in time we reached the hill that overlooked a hollow, beyond which was the expanse of black burnt grass. I ungirthed my horse, my people all flung themselves exhausted on the ground; their faces were crimson with heat; their limbs were bruised by their frequent falls; their eyes seemed starting from their sockets. Poor Pit, who had scrambled along

with the front oxen, had his shirt torn from his back, and his chest was smeared with blood from many a wound, but fortunately none that was very deep.

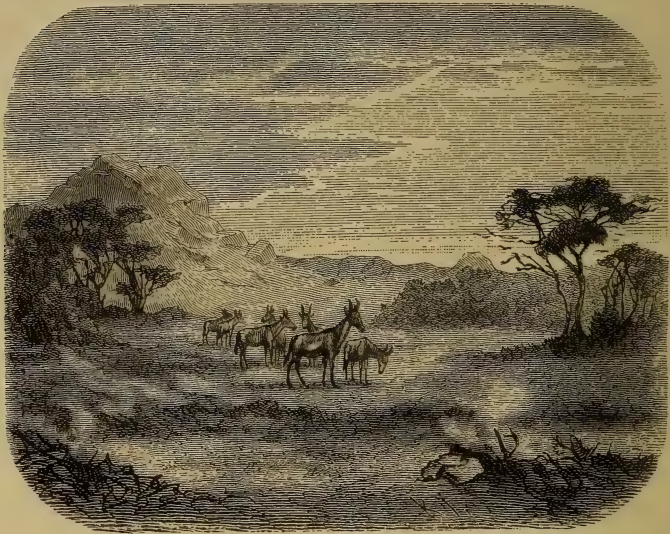
The fatigue and excitement that we had undergone demanded some repose, but the miseries of the thirst we were enduring did not permit us to wait long. As soon as possible we started off again; we had no difficulty in finding the proper tracks; and fortunately for our worn-out team, which had to pause about every hundred yards, the ground was quite level. Evening began to draw on; to alleviate our sufferings we were obliged to moisten our burning lips with vinegar; we were too depressed to speak, and kept a moody silence. Once Pit broke the stillness by calling out to us to look to the right; we raised our eyes just to notice that three hartebeests were almost in the road before us; but so excessive was our languor that no one seemed to care that they were there.

While I was in Africa three kinds of hartebeest antelopes came under my observation. The common hartebeest, found throughout South Africa, as far as the Zambesi, but most frequently in the bushy parts of the southern and central districts; the sesepi, or Zulu hartebeest, which is found in the same districts, but north of the Zambesi as well; and a third species, which appears closely allied to the common hartebeest.

I shall have occasion hereafter to refer to the

sesephi, which in various respects resembles the buntbock; but I may here say a few words about the hartebeest proper.

From the effect of its elongated head and angular horns, the common hartebeest may perhaps be pronounced the ugliest of all the antelopes. I myself found it most frequently between the Vaal and the Soa Salt Lake, though I was told that it is quite



HARTEBEEST.

common in the east and north-east of the Transvaal, and in the northern parts of Cape Colony. Being less timid than other kinds, it is more exposed to destruction; it lives in small herds, often inhabiting the same districts as the striped gnu. The probable reason of its comparative rarity in the more northern regions of Central South Africa is that the Baman-

gwatos are especially partial to its skin for their dresses, and it has consequently been much sought for, till its numbers have diminished.

In places where trees are not too numerous, it is generally hunted on horseback. When pursued, its motion is very awkward, probably on account of the



HEAD OF THE HARTEBEEST (*Antilope Caama*).

unusual height of the shoulders. Although this species of hartebeest (*Antilope Caama*) is the commonest of the three kinds I have mentioned, I am under the impression that it is a rarity in European menageries; indeed, I am not aware that the trans-

Zambesi kind has ever been represented there at all. In the country of the central Bechuanas, and in the forests, they are approached under cover of the foliage, and are usually found on the borders of glades, and anywhere where there is a tolerably open range for their view. By white hunters they are often chased promiscuously with elephants, ostriches, and other wild game.

So obscured were all the waggon-tracks by the ashes left by the fire, that it was a matter of no little difficulty for our guide to distinguish the proper way towards the native settlements. The trials of the day seemed never coming to an end. Our thirst became more and more painful, our throats being parched, and our tongues cleaving to our mouths. Our sufferings enforced a melancholy silence. Any hope we had entertained that the heat would moderate as daylight waned, proved quite fallacious, as the evening was exceptionally hot, and the breeze that had been blowing was completely lulled. At last, however, the distant baying of some dogs caught our ear, and never was any sound more welcome; and when, soon afterwards, the monotonous chant of the native girls, accompanying themselves on their wooden castanets, could be distinguished, it was as music unsurpassed in sweetness. Here at length was the promise of relief from our tortures.

Lights from the hut-fires were soon visible. Leaving the waggon standing unguarded where it was, every one of us, guide included, rushed im-



WOODS AT THE FOOT OF THE MALAU HEIGHTS.

patiently to the huts. A lot of yelping curs ran out to meet us; the singing of the women ceased, and one solitary man advanced in our direction, evidently astonished that a waggon should be passing at such an hour. Seizing him by the arm, I shouted in his ear, "Meci, meci;" startled by my vehemence he uttered a loud cry, probably of alarm, for our black guide burst into a fit of laughter. However, I had made him understand me, and he went into his hut, whence he soon returned, bringing a huge horn full of stinking stuff, which he declared was his entire supply of water, and for which he demanded half-a-crown. Neither in quality nor in quantity did this suffice us, and after some further parleying, we made him comprehend what we wanted, when he and two of his wives brought us out some bowls of milk, which we speedily emptied. After our thirst was thus quenched we began very shortly to have a sense of hunger, and lost no time in kindling a good fire and getting a leg of mutton, which we watched while it was roasting. We sat and talked over the steppe-burning, and our happy deliverance from our alarming predicament. To the south we could still see the glow in the sky, which made it certain that the fire was not yet subdued in that quarter.

These fires occasionally arise from accidents, and from carelessness, but in districts where there are few shrubs and trees to be injured, the farmers in dry winters not unfrequently purposely set fire to the

steppes, with the object, they say, of promoting the growth of the grass. It is known, too, that ostrich-hunters were formerly in the habit of causing these conflagrations so as to get a crop of tender-sprouting grass, which is always attractive to the birds, who delight in the young herbage. Fires of this kind are likewise to be seen from time to time amongst the low scap- (sheep-) bushes, rarely exceeding eighteen inches high, on the plains both in the Colony and the Free State, and on dark nights the glowing streaks that mark the heavens are thus accounted for.

We had hardly travelled half an hour next morning before we discovered that the waggon-tracks that we had been following had brought us into the same road that we had used on our previous journey from Gassibone to the Vaal. Our good-natured guide here took leave of us, and we descended one of the passes leading to Gassibone's kraal. The defile was wide, but became much narrower at the farther end; the sides, although they were covered with luxuriant vegetation, yet permitted the terrace-like stratification of the hills to be distinctly traced. The flat parts were overgrown with wild mimosas, and had an aspect not unlike the cherry-gardens planted on our own hill-sides in Europe.

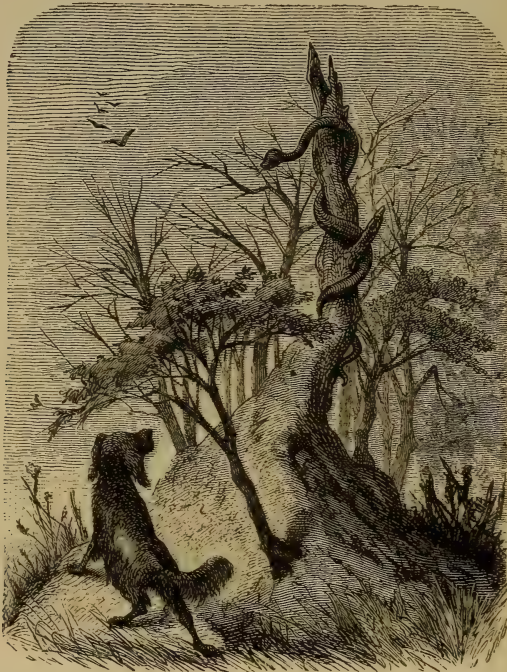
It was about noon when we reached the kraal. Passing through it, we encamped under some trees in a hollow close to the bed of a torrent. The ground was covered with a rich sward

that on account of its sheltered situation and its proximity to the water had retained a pleasant freshness.

Proceeding along one of the passes beyond the settlement, we ascended some high land, whence we could see that dark clouds were beginning to gather. Pit told us that the rain for which we had longed so much was certainly now coming, and after a short consultation, we decided to halt at once, and unyoked our oxen about three miles after starting. Pit was right enough; the clouds rolled on in rapidly increasing masses, and before another hour had passed the rain came down in such a deluge as I have rarely seen before or since. We would have given much for such a downpour on the previous day.

The storm lasted for about two hours; it took some time for the water to clear off; but when it ceased to foam along in torrents, and began to trickle down more gently from the hillsides, we thought we might venture to proceed another stage, though it was getting on towards sundown. The defile along which we passed was quite narrow, except in one or two places where it opened out into a plain. Niger, my dog, was on in front; he was foraging in the long grass, when suddenly he started off in pursuit of something that we could not see. There was a strangeness in his movements that perplexed me; he kept springing forwards, and as suddenly retreating, and I was curious to find out what was disturbing him. I stopped the waggon,

and when I approached the dog I found him in front of a great tubular ant-hill, barking furiously. The other dogs began to bark in concert. I soon saw the cause of the animal's excitement; a great yellow cobra-capella, nearly seven feet long, was



NIGER AND THE COBRA.

winding itself round the ant-hill; its neck was all inflated, and it was hissing vehemently. A moment was enough for me; I put a charge of small shot clean into the reptile, and had the satisfaction of dragging it out from the bushwood, a notable addition to my naturalist's collection.

In the course of the evening we came to the

broad valley which had been described to us as the shortest route to Taung, and, leaving the main pass, we turned into it towards the north, and settled ourselves for the night.

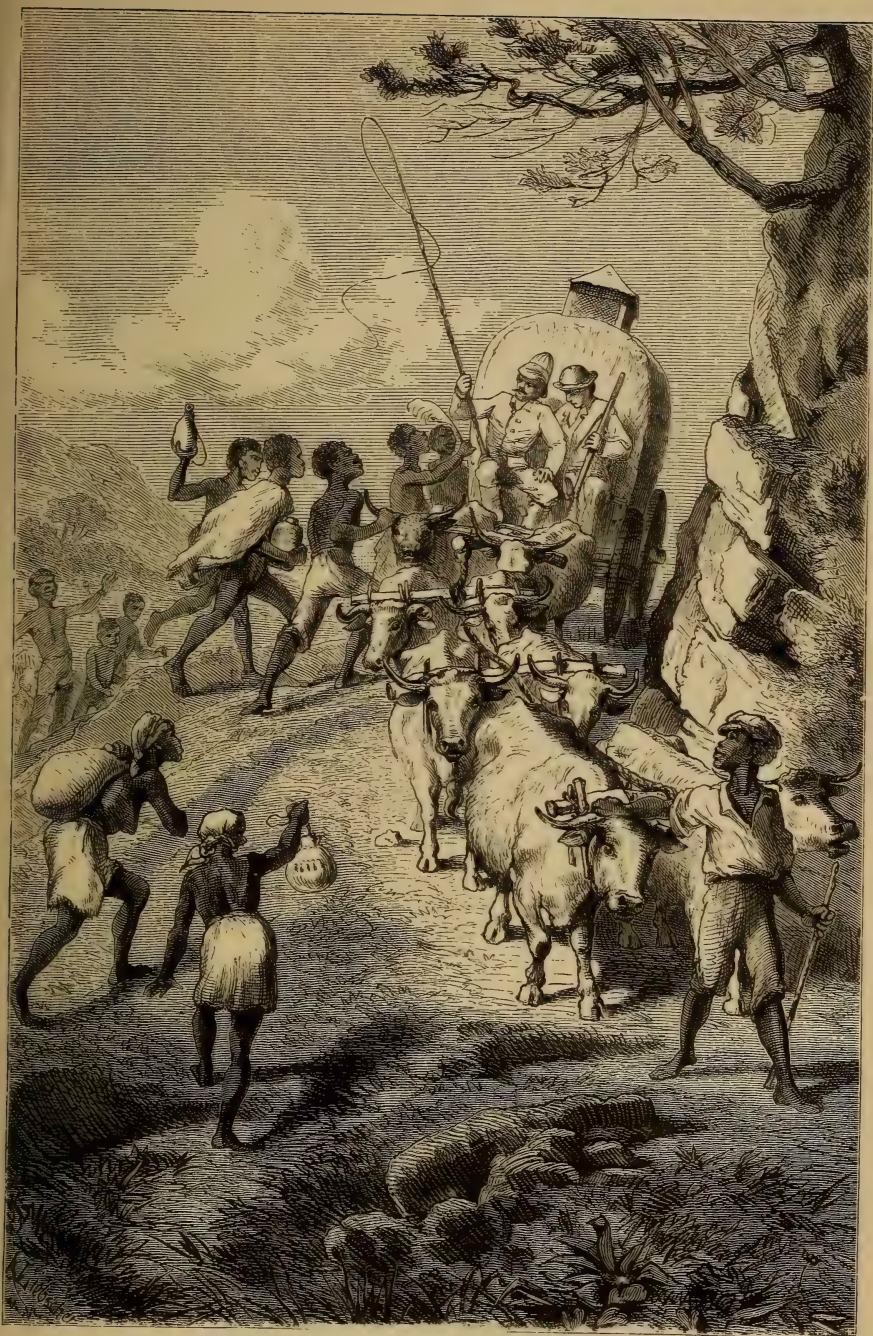
The day following the storm was dull and chilly. Our road lay first across a hollow, with some Batlapin huts on one of its bare slopes; then through an opening in the hills to a dense wood, and thence into another hollow, split up into about a hundred little allotments about fifty yards square.

It took us the best part of an hour and a half to get over this ground; but when we mounted the high ground beyond, we found ourselves in sight of the Harts River valley, which was right before us. The bill-ridges round Taung seem to form a sort of network. None of them rise more than 800 feet above the level of the river, but the scenery which they form is rather attractive. To reach the ford we had to skirt the first ridge, and then bend northwards.

After a former ruler, Taung is also called Mahura's Town. It lies under the shelter of a rocky height, a short distance from the right bank of the river, where a rush of yellow water was streaming down the bed, which in many places was overgrown with reeds.

As we wended our way down the slope, we came within view of another native village. The mere sight of our waggon served to put its population into a state of extreme excitement. A whole crowd

of men, in tattered European clothes, except now and then one in a mangy skin, followed by as many women, all naked except for little leather aprons, and by a swarm of children as naked as when they were born, came shouting eagerly towards us. They were nearly all provided with bottles, or pots, or cans, and cried out for brandy. "Suppy, suppy, bas, verkup Brandwen!" they repeated impatiently. They had brought all manner of things to barter for spirits. One man held up a jackal's hide, another a goat-skin; another offered us bullock-thongs; yet another had brought out a bullock-yoke; and some of them had their home-made wooden spoons and platters to dispose of to us. It was a disgusting scene. We tried to treat the whole matter with contempt, and to take no notice of their demand; but when we attempted to drive on, their importunities waxed louder than ever. They caught hold of the bridles, and pushed the oxen back, becoming ever more and more clamorous. One of the men made what he evidently imagined would be an irresistible appeal, by offering me a couple of greasy shillings. They next tried to bribe us with some skins of milk, which the women were made to bring out from the huts, and they were driven to despair when they found that the offer of a goat that they dragged forward was not accepted. Their screechings and shoutings were of no avail; not a drop of fire-water was to be extorted from me. We had almost to beat them off before they would allow us to proceed. A few persevered in following



MOBBED FOR SPIRITS.

us to the ford, and made a final effort to secure one bottle by a private negotiation, out of sight of their neighbours. They confidentially offered five shillings for the bottle; but I was inexorable.

The entire width of the river was here about sixty yards, but it had a rocky island in the middle, so that practically there were two streams to cross. The current, after the rain, was still so strong that every one seemed to think it would be prudent to delay the passage for a little longer. I did not share the apprehension, but was quite willing to acquiesce in the universal opinion. Under a large acacia, a short distance from where we were waiting, stood a waggon and a couple of huts, which we could see at once were occupied by a white family; some broken wheels, some old iron, and some blacksmith's tools lying about, betokened the occupation of the owner. He was one of two smiths who resided in the place. He had taken up his quarters here close by the ford, the other having settled near the entrance of the glen, by the mission-station. He complained that the diminution of the population, and the general impoverishment of the place, had seriously interfered with his business; but he had nevertheless succeeded in getting together a goodly herd of sheep and cows. The other smith might have done equally well, but he had spent all his earnings in brandy. Naturally, there was not much good feeling between the rivals.

In answer to our inquiries about the ford, we were told that all the traders, giraffe and ostrich-hunters,

missionaries, or any one who wanted to take the shortest cut through Kuruman, crossed by it; but, somehow or other, nearly every third waggon managed more or less to come to grief. The chief was disinclined to do anything to improve the ford; nor, if he had been disposed, would it have been of much good, as the stream, every time it was swollen, brought down such accumulations of sand, soil, and stones, that the character of the channel was perpetually altering.

Acting under the advice of the blacksmith, who pronounced the ford perfectly safe, we crossed in the afternoon, reaching the opposite side without the least difficulty, and after a short rest went on to Taung. Without pausing in the native quarter, we proceeded to the mission-house, a stone building, with a gabled roof thatched with grass, standing in a nice little garden. On entering we found ourselves face to face with a gentleman about thirty years of age, with a long light beard. He looked at us at first with some surprise, especially at my friend F., who was carrying arms. He was the resident missionary, Mr. Brown. I soon introduced myself, and explained the object of my journey, and he at once gave us a very kindly welcome, apologizing for the simplicity and limited extent of his accommodation. He mentioned that he was engaged upon the compilation of a Sechuana dictionary, a work that has since been published. After ascertaining that we intended making a short halt at Taung, he invited me to bring the waggon into his enclosure,

saying that I should thus escape being pestered by the natives for brandy. Even Mankuruane himself was often very troublesome to strangers, and the protection of the mission-house would be a shelter from annoyance. Just at present, however, the chief was not at home, having gone to Kuruman on a visit to another chief, named Mora. Mrs. Brown and her children were also at the same place; they had gone to spend a few weeks with the wife of the missionary there. The place altogether was very picturesque, being, both for its pleasantness and for its population, the foremost of all the Batlapin towns. It formerly contained nearly 6000 inhabitants, but by the year 1879 it was not so large by one-third.

We resumed our journey on the afternoon of the 12th. We took a north-north-east course, and at no great distance from the Harts River came to the Barolong kraal, called by the name of its chieftain, Maruma. The excessive rainfall must have been confined to a very limited area; for, although we had had it so heavily, the little river here was quite dry, and there was hardly any water at all to be had except in some holes that had been made for the purpose.

Next midday we left the valley, and after a short drive along some stony hills, arrived at a rich tract of pasture-land. Whilst on our halt, I killed a fine bird of prey (*Melieræ canorus*), and a large lizard of the kind which I have before described.

Approaching now the north-eastern frontier of the

Batlapin country, I expected soon to enter upon the small territory belonging to the Mamusa Korannas. Turning our course due north on the 14th, we found ourselves on another extensive plain, overgrown with bushes. Several heavy showers fell, and at last induced us to make a halt; but the sight of a number of antelopes darting about among the marethwa-bushes was too tempting to be resisted, and I started out for a chase. This proved a more troublesome matter than I had anticipated. To avoid the bushes, I had to twist my horse about continually; and this I found so discouraging that I thought I might venture to change my tactics, and make a bold dash straight ahead. My horse had hardly begun to bound forward when he came to a sudden pause; failing to leap over a mimosa, he had plunged into the middle of it. I endeavoured to pull him back, but the sharp double thorns ran into him so much the more. The poor creature began to kick violently, and snorting aloud, only got more deeply imbedded in the prickles. My clothes began to suffer considerably in the struggle, and glad enough I was when the horse contrived to extricate its hind-quarters from the bush. I threw my gun upon the ground and managed to alight, and finally to drag the excited animal clear away; but my face, my arms, my neck, even my legs, were all smarting violently; and when I made my way back to the waggon, I was only to be compared to the triumphant hero of a cat-fight. I am not likely to forget my experience of that mimosa-

tree. Nature, like a cruel step-mother, seems to have banished some of the offspring of Flora, unendowed with fragrancy or honey, to the desert wilds of Africa, where they take their revenge on any unoffending mortals that come within their reach.

Soon afterwards we entered a shallow valley, nearly circular in form, and on the heights surround-



CAUGHT BY THORNS.

ing it we observed a few native farms. The valley itself opened on to a steppe, covered with tall, dry grass, where a herd of sprightly springbocks were enjoying their antics. We halted for two hours for dinner. Just as we were preparing to move on, we saw a Kaffir waggon approaching from the north. The owner, a Batlapin, wearing a long great-coat,

was recognized by Pit as a man he had previously known at Klipdrift. Once, Pit said, he had been poor, but now he was very rich, possessing two waggons and large herds of cattle. He increased his gains by travelling about amongst the Barolongs between the Harts River and Molapo, selling the commodities that he purchased in the diamond-fields. Having ascertained from Pit that I was the "bas" of



CHEAP DIAMONDS.

the waggon, he walked round it twice or thrice, and then, leering at me with his twinkling eyes, he put his hand to his hat and said, in most insinuating tone, "Sir!" Then producing from his pocket a little box, about two inches in diameter, such as were commonly disposed of to the natives for snuff-boxes, he gave a cunning grin, and began to rattle

it. I at once got an inkling as to the way in which he had gained some of his wealth. He jerked his finger towards his servants, and said that they had been working for him in the diggings, and here was the result of their toil. Opening the box, he showed me some twenty diamonds or more, the largest being of about three carats, and told me that I might have the lot for 30s. Feeling only too certain that they had all been stolen, I positively refused to be a purchaser.

In the course of the march during the afternoon I found a good many weevils under the leaves of a liliaceous plant, as well as several kinds of locusts that were new to me. It poured with rain in the evening, and we had to put up a canvas awning for a shelter.

We began our next march by passing over some plains of short grass that were swarming with myriads of large-winged ants. The rain had been so abundant during the last few days, that I did not doubt for a moment that we should find plenty of water everywhere. We did not take the trouble to procure a supply for ourselves, nor did we give the oxen a proper draught before starting; our disappointment was consequently very great when we ascertained that there was none to be had, and that once again we were to be exposed to the torture of thirst. A turn in the valley showed us the bed of a spruit not far off, and I felt certain that after such rain as we had witnessed there would of necessity be at least some water trickling along it. Accord-

ingly, I clambered down the sides, which were nearly perpendicular, and determined to investigate the bottom. A number of other defiles opened into the



SURPRISED BY BABOONS.

chasm, and the spot was most picturesque; but to my chagrin I found that there were no signs of water. Defeated in the object for which I had taken the pains to descend the ravine, I was turning

to leave it, when some stones came pattering down the rocks in my direction. I soon became aware that the stones were being designedly aimed at me; and, looking up, I saw a herd of baboons perched among the trees. I had my gun with me; and, not being in the mood to be pelted in this fashion, I fired into a tree upon which two of the baboons were sitting. It was only attached to a cleft in the rock by a single root, and my shot tore it right asunder. One of the baboons sprang wildly into the air, the other clung in alarm to the falling stem. An old male now appeared just in front, and began to pick up some stones; a second shot, however, had the effect of putting him and the entire group to a speedy flight.

The hill that we next ascended bore all the appearance of having been occupied, though probably more than a century ago, by Makalahari or some other native tribes; the summit was covered by a number of enclosures made of rough-hewn stones, and about two or three feet high, varying from fifteen to twenty-five square yards in area. Many of the Bechuana tribes declare that their own grandfathers occupied the site, but it seems unlikely that the abandonment of the position has been quite so recent.

From the top of the hill we could see the country round for some fifteen miles; it sank gradually towards the north. Five miles ahead we made out a native village, and hastened on towards it, in the eager hope of getting water; but on reach-

ing it we only received directions to make for a depression further on to the north-west, now partially hidden by the slope on which we were standing. We arrived at the place only to meet with fresh disappointment; and distressed as we were by our prolonged thirst, we were compelled to pass another night without any relief.

We lost no time in making a start the following morning, and, turning into a wide valley that ran northwards, we came in sight of a native village, consisting of about forty huts, the shape of which evidenced that they were the property of Koranna and Bechuana Barolongs. The village ran principally along the right bank of a little river-bed containing a number of small pools. Our bullocks soon sniffed the water, and quickening their pace, were making their way almost beyond control to the bank, when suddenly all further progress was blockaded by a dozen or more Koranna men, all dressed as usual in ragged European costume. Making violent gesticulations, and shouting aloud, they made me understand that no animals could be allowed to drink there for less than five shillings a head. Of course I repudiated a demand so exorbitant, and offered what seemed to me a more reasonable compensation. They refused to listen to my terms, nor could Pit, with all his powers of persuasion, induce them to swerve from their determination.

They had soon found out the desperate condition of thirst to which we were reduced, and had made

up their minds to make a good bargain out of our necessities ; but I was not to be baffled ; and, knowing them to be thorough cowards, informed them that, whether they liked it or not, I was resolved to have the water I required. Taking it for granted that my threat implied a recourse to fire-arms, they set up a piteous howl, and kept on bawling out some native word, which I was told was a cry for help. In answer to the appeal a number of the inhabitants came hurrying out, Korannas armed with muskets, Barolongs and Makalahari brandishing assegais. The Korannas who carried guns were for the most part women. Partly in their own tongue, partly in Dutch, the whole crowd, now nearly fifty altogether, broke out into the most savage invectives ; the women shrieked out the most dreadful of imprecations, while the children, from behind the enclosures, yelled to the top of their voices ; our own dogs, of course, were the reverse of mute, and the native curs yelped and snarled in chorus. Never was there a more complete pandemonium. I had come with the most peaceable intentions ; yet, here I was, either by my own want of tact, or by their greed of alcohol, all but involved in a fatal contention with the natives.

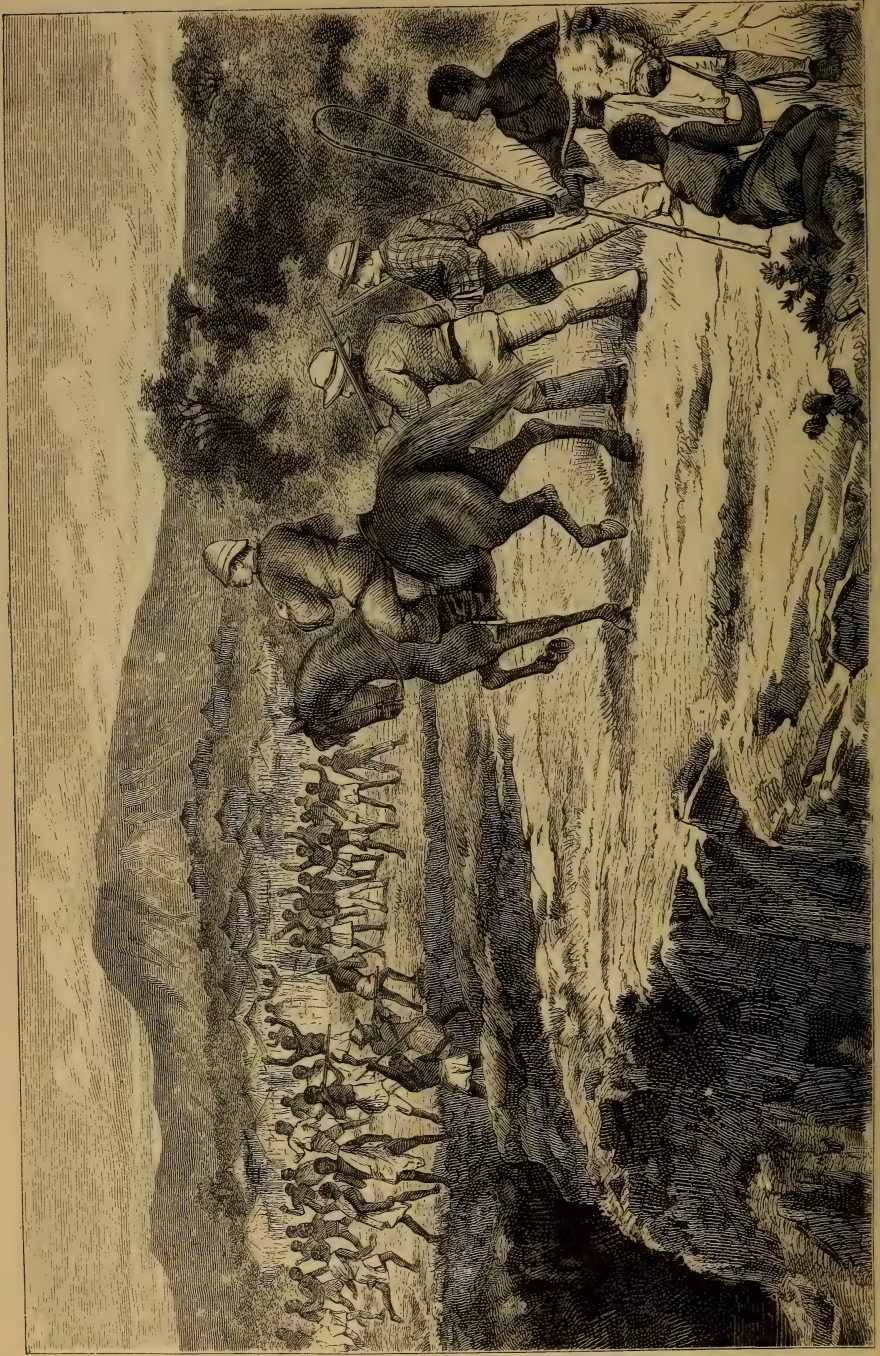
Seeing the threatening aspect of affairs, my people levelled their guns ; this led to a counter-demonstration, and the weapons of our antagonists were pointed against us. My knowledge of the Koranna character came to my aid, and prevented me from

getting into a dilemma; I was quite aware that however much they might be urged on by a few care-for-naught leaders, as a rule they were the most abject of cowards. Upon this conviction I acted, and avoided any precipitate measures.

Leaving two of our party in charge of the waggon, I rode out quite alone towards the mob. They did not attack me; I did not suppose they would; but louder than ever they assailed me with the bitterest revilings. Steadily I advanced towards them, when all at once the foremost began to retreat; the rear quickly began to follow. In a moment the exultant voice of Pit behind me, shouted, "Det kerle lup! Det kerle lup!"¹

I heard the triumphant tone, and dashed off into a gallop. Had I been a field-marshal ordering my forces to retire, I could not more effectually have cleared the field. When I pulled up I could only burst into a fit of laughter; the comical way in which man, woman, and child had struggled to keep out of reach of my horse's heels was irresistible, none of them apparently feeling safe until helter-skelter they had reached the security of their own hedges; once within these, they turned to deliver their maledictions more vigorously than before; perhaps I was not the worse off for being unable to comprehend what was doubtless a tirade against the overbearing acts of the white man. There was no further opposition, and our famished animals were at once sent forward to enjoy a refreshing drink,

¹ "The fellows are making off!"



RECEPTION IN MUSEMANYANA.

while we took care to replenish our own vessels with an ample supply of water.

As we quitted the village we were greeted by another storm of vituperation, which, as we did not condescend to take any notice of it, became more furious than ever; but so uproarious did the shouting become that the riot unfortunately startled our oxen, and caused them to swerve aside so suddenly that our front axle snapped in two. No more untimely accident could have befallen us, and we involuntarily raised a cry of dismay. I congratulated myself most thoroughly on not having come into overt collision with the people, for, in spite of their being cowards and the worst of marksmen, they might, by a stray shot from their old muskets, have done us a very serious mischief; moreover, to have come to grief amongst the Barolongs or Makalahari would have been a very different thing from finding ourselves helpless in the midst of an infuriated crowd of odious Korannas.

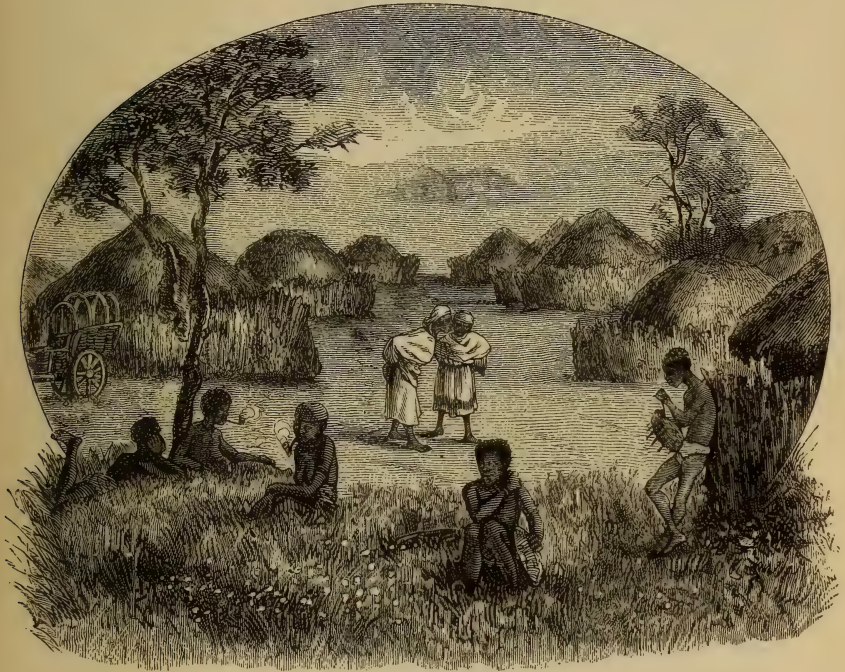
As it was, I relied very much upon the effect of my firmness with regard to the water, and was right in my conjecture that the natives would not try to take advantage of our misadventure. They no sooner saw what had happened than they hurried back from the enclosures to which they had retreated, and began laughing, hooting, and screaming around us; the children danced merrily at the fun. At a hint from me my people, who had been sitting on the front of the waggon with their guns on their knees ready for action, laid them aside, and joined

in the general laugh ; this had a wonderful effect in bringing the crowd into good humour ; I took the opportunity of telling the old barefooted overseer that I should have to water my cattle at his pools oftener than I expected ; however, I was quite willing, I said, to pay him properly, and he was soon in as amicable a mood as the rest, and recommended me to send for a certain man in the village of Marokana, who would be able to replace the damaged axle.

Within the last ten years, and especially since the introduction of spirituous liquors into the country, wherever the Hottentot element has mingled with the Bantu, or whenever the Batlapins, Barolongs, or other kindred tribes have not had capable and responsible men for their chiefs, they have been corrupted by the Korannas, Griquas, and others who have adopted all the vices, and none of the virtues of the white men. The consequence has been that drunkenness, idleness, robbery, and even murder, have become rife among them. It is sincerely to be hoped that the measures lately taken by the government in Griqualand West with regard to the Korannas will have beneficial results.

The arrangement that I made with the overseer was that our cattle should have as much water as they wanted at the rate of a shilling a day each ; he was even considerate enough to direct me to some clean pools that had never been used by the villagers. Before I set out again, I engaged the services of two native lads for eight shillings a week each. Pit's wages were ten shillings a week.

Musemanyana is the most northerly possession of the Koranna king of Mamusa; on the north and east it is bounded by plains abounding in game. To these plains I have given the name of "Quagga Flats;" they belong to Montsua, and are the common hunting-grounds of Batlapins, Barolongs,



MUSEMANYANA.

Korannas, and Dutch farmers, who come either from the Western Transvaal, or have been permitted by various chiefs to settle on their territory. On the west lies the small dominion of the Marokana chief who nominally owns allegiance to Montsua, the king of the Barolongs, but without any payment of tribute.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM MUSEMANYANA TO MOSHANENG.

Departure from Musemanyana— The Quagga Flats—Hyæna-hunt by moonlight—Makalahari horsemanship—Konana—A lion on the Sitlagole—Animal life on the table-land—Gnu-hunt at night—A missing comrade—Piles of bones—Hunting a wild goose—South African spring-time—Molema's Town—Mr. Webb and the Mission-house—The chief Molema—Huss Hill—Neighbourhood of Moshaneng—Illustrious visitors.

No sooner was the axle mended than we left Musemanyana, travelling on till it was quite late at night. The wind was blowing almost a gale when we halted, and in lighting our fire we had some difficulty in preventing another steppe-burning; the next morning, however, the 21st, was warm and bright. Shortly after starting we came across some Makalahari and Barolong women collecting young locusts just emerged from their pupa state. It was not until we had gone on for three hours and a half that we arrived at a depression, and found some pools of clear water; from this point our road lay to the north-east, over wide plains with bushes few and far between. The dry grass had all the pleasant fragrance of hay, and

young blades were already sprouting amidst the withering stems. In all directions the ground was burrowed by jumping-hares, porcupines, and earth-pigs. Hyænas had taken possession of the holes that the earth-pigs had deserted, and occasionally we observed the lairs of jackals. In localities ex-



BAROLONG MAIDEN COLLECTING LOCUSTS.

clusively populated by natives, jackals, caama-foxes, and proteles are freely hunted for the sake of their skins, which are made into coats ; but in the parts where white men predominate, and game is abundant, hyænas are chiefly made the object of attack, being partially exterminated by strychnine.

Fourteen miles further on we came to another valley, broader than the last, and containing numerous pools; the grass here, although it had been burnt down in September, had already grown again a foot high. In the valley was the last of the outlying settlements, belonging to Hendrick, the chief of Musemanyana, and we counted more than a hundred of his cattle. The plains extended right away to the horizon on every side.

We next entered upon the Quagga Flats, and found ourselves upon Montsua's territory. The weather continued genial, and the wind had dropped, but the marshy condition of the soil made our progress still difficult. Meeting some Barolong people on their way from Marokana to hunt, I tried to bargain with them for the exchange of some of my draught-oxen, but our negotiation fell through, as the Barolongs demanded 8*l.* a head on every bullock that should be bartered.

On the 23rd F. and I, accompanied by "Boy," one of our new black servants, left the waggon and went off on a little hunting-excursion. It was on this occasion that I first became aware of the fact that springbock gazelles leave their fawns all day, only returning to them in the evening to stay with them at night. Any one wandering about the plains where the grass is not many inches high may come within twenty yards of the pretty little creatures without perceiving them, and although they do not try to escape observation, like the orbeki gazelles, by lying flat upon the ground,

they are often very effectually concealed by the herbage.

In the course of the afternoon we turned into a road leading northwards that subsequently proved to be the direct route between Mamusa and Konana ; the track had probably not been open to vehicles until within the last three months, though apparently it had been previously used as a footpath by the natives. We were now on the edge of a plain that extended east and west as far as the eye could reach, but was bounded on the north by some hill-tops, and broken in the same direction by clumps of wood ; these, however, were some miles away. A lovely evening passed into just as lovely a night, and the full moon, encircled by the very slightest of halos, and stars twinkling with a subdued lustre, shed a kindly glimmer over the dark grey plain. In spite of fatigue, I lay awake long enjoying the beauty of the scene, my companions all sound asleep, and the dogs the sole sharers of my watch.

A sudden movement on the part of Niger disturbed me from my reverie ; followed by Onkel, another of our dogs, he sprang forward and began to growl. The long-drawn howl of a spotted hyæna had broken the stillness of the night, and though it was, as I supposed, at some distance, it quite accounted for the agitation of the dogs. I was so well accustomed to the sound that I did not pay much regard to it, and prepared to lay down my head to sleep ; but so obstreperous did the dogs

become, that I was soon convinced that the intruders could not be far away, and resolved to make a raid upon the disturbers of our rest. I crept up to Pit and Boy, and after shaking them till they were awake enough to understand me, I gave them orders to hold in the dogs. Going to F., I tried to arouse him, but did not wait to



A HYÆNA HUNT.

ascertain whether he took in what I said to him. Without losing more time than I could help, I procured some ammunition, and started off in the direction from which the howling seemed to come. The servant-boys had the greatest difficulty in preventing the dogs from following me; the whole canine race of Africa instinctively regards the

hyæna as an enemy that should be attacked whenever opportunity affords.

I advanced about a hundred yards, sometimes stooping, sometimes crawling on my hands and knees, but without seeing any signs of hyænas ; all at once, however, a low growl reached my ear, and I placed myself behind an ant-hill ready to take advantage of the first chance of a shot. In vain I waited. I made the best scrutiny I could of the surroundings, but I could see nothing but ant-hills, and the growls were not repeated. I was beginning to suppose that my own movements had scared the beasts away ; still I waited on till the ants began to make my position uncomfortable, not to say untenable. Just as I was thinking I must retire, I was startled by a hideous yell, scarcely a dozen yards away. I strained my eyes to peer everywhere around me, but the moonlight revealed nothing but ant-hills in every direction. Whilst I was still in suspense, I became aware of a savage growl close at my heels ; turning myself round, I was about to fire, when Niger's well-known bark made me hold my hand. Frantic with excitement, the dog had been too much for Pit to hold, and Boy, fearful that the hyæna would be more than a match for him, had let Onkel, a far stronger animal, loose as well ; and now the two dogs together were scouring the place, full of eagerness to scent out their enemy. They scampered backwards and forwards, far and near ; but the hyænas had obviously adopted the prudent plan of timely retreat, and at last I was

compelled to abandon all further hope of success, and returned to the waggon to bear my disappointment as best I could.

Of all the South African beasts of prey, the spotted hyæna is the most enduring and the most tenacious of life, and I have known instances where they have withstood the effects of fearful wounds for double the time that I believe other mammalia could have held out. I shall have to refer to these animals more than once again.

Next morning we reached one of the patches of wood that we had seen towards the distant north; it contained some wretched huts, made of branches driven in the ground and covered with leaves, occupied by Yochoms, a branch of the Makalahari. These Yochoms were dependents of a Barolong, named Mokalana, who resided in another of these woods a few miles away; both settlements bore the names of their respective owners. The custom that the Bechuanas have of calling their towns and villages after their builders or owners, frequently causes a great deal of confusion, as in this way a place sometimes gets known by two or three names, those of past as well as present chiefs; and when a chief changes his place of residence, the new settlement will bear the same name as the old one, although it may be not more than a few miles distant.

The Yochoms had to look after a herd of cows and sheep for their liege lord, and it was also their business to hunt for him; for this purpose they

were supplied with horses, and seemed much more at home in the saddle than any other of the Bechuanas.

By a present of a pocket-knife, I induced one of the natives to ride off to the "Bas" and inquire whether he was disposed to let me have some young



A YOCHOM OF THE KALAHARI CHASING A BLESSBOCK.

oxen in exchange for my old ones, if I gave him proper compensation in money and ammunition.

While we were taking our mid-day meal, another Makalahari came back from hunting, mounted on a powerful brown mare. Quite imposing in his appearance was this swarthy son of the South African

table-land, as he rode along in his shining leather tunic, the shafts of his assegais supported in a leathern socket attached to the stirrup, and the carcass of a blessbock slung across the front of his primitive saddle.

All the horses are bred upon the plains, and so well accustomed are they to the clumps of grass and to the holes in the soil, that the riders give themselves no concern about their bridles, but chase the fugitive herds of antelopes at full gallop, and generally succeed in overtaking them (except the springbucks, which are too fleet to be caught in this way) in about half an hour; the assegai is then brought into requisition, and is aimed with such precision that it rarely fails to hit its mark. One head of game thus secured, the huntsman, as a rule, never attempts to get a second, but having despatched his booty with his other assegai, he forthwith turns his horse's head homewards. The fewer the wounds which the animal receives, the greater the value of its skin to the Bas.

As my messenger was long in returning, I began to prepare to start; but just as the bullocks were being harnessed the man was espied in the distance. The message he brought was to the effect that the Bas had only one team for his own use, and that he could not consent to part with it. At the same time, however, he sent word that he had a sheep which he would exchange for a mug (about 1 lb.) of gunpowder. Accepting his offer, I received a fine "fat-tail;" and, in addition to the gunpowder, I

gave several trifling articles, such as needles, tinder-boxes, and little chains, which the Makalahari reciprocated by presenting me with some proteles' skins, and a few blessbock and hartebeest horns.

The unwelcome announcement was made to me the first thing next morning that one of my bullocks had died in the night, so that the burden of the waggon had to fall upon three pair instead of four.

Opening into the valley along which we were making our way were several side valleys, all containing cultivated fields. After a few miles we came upon one of these running north and south, which, we were informed by some passing Korannas, was that of the Konana River, that flows through highlands to the Maretsana. These highlands are occupied by Korannas and Barolongs and their vassals, and are under the protection of their chief, Shebor, who in his turn is subject to Montsua.

After rather a tedious drive, we came to Konana, which lay extended along the slope of a hill studded with trees, and contained 1000 inhabitants. I indulged a hope that I should be able here to procure some fresh bullocks; and in order to attract the attention of the people, I encamped on an open piece of sward just to the east of the town, on a declivity leading downwards to the river, and made a display in front of the waggon of various commodities that I had brought with me to enable me to make purchases for my scientific collection. It was not long before a crowd of visitors arrived, and with much curiosity inspected my stock, which con-

sisted of a velveteen suit, two bright woollen shirts, a hat, half a dozen pocket-handkerchiefs, and half a roll of tobacco. But, although the chief came in person, I found no one disposed to negotiate with me for what I wanted.

Several of the residents, who entered into con-



A BAROLONG STORY-TELLER,

versation with us, informed us that the surrounding hills, as well as the heights along the Sitlagole and Maretsana Rivers, were infested with lions, which were so accustomed to the sight of men and to the sound of fire-arms that they were incredibly bold. Although the plains were abundantly supplied with

game, the monarchs of the forest exhibited a decided predilection for domestic animals; and the chief, Shebor, told us that he had to lament, not only the loss of many of his cattle, but of several of his people; and he advised us to keep a sharp look-out all along the opposite hills, which were amongst their favourite resorts.

He related a distressing incident that had occurred on one of the neighbouring rivers. A party of natives were on their way from Maraba, in the Makalaka country, to the diamond-fields, a distance of 800 miles. It was by no means unusual for such parties to quit their homes with simply a hide and an assegai, quite prepared, during their long and arduous journey, to live on nothing but roots, wild fruit, and occasionally a small head of game. The spectacle they would present to any traveller who might meet them was very piteous. Sometimes they would be almost destitute of food of any sort for days together, and be reduced well-nigh to skeletons. Their progress would become more and more painful; and they would endeavour to mitigate the pangs of hunger by drawing in the waist-bands which with a strip of hide formed clothing. The ordinary custom was for them to travel in single file, the strongest first, then the less robust, followed by the weakest; so that an invalid would often be quite by himself, a long way in the rear. In the party of which the chief was speaking there were two brothers, one of whom, on account of his feeble condition of health, had for more than a week been

obliged to take his place last in the procession. Arriving at the bank of the Sitlagole, the party halted to search for some roots, not unlike turnips, which were known to grow there, and which they hoped to cook and enjoy for supper. They found the roots in such abundance that it was resolved to spend the night on the spot, and they kindled a fire to prepare their meal. On closing in, it was soon ascertained that the sick comrade was missing. They looked at each other with much perplexity; but the brother of the absent man, without losing a moment, snatched up his own and his brother's share of the roots that had been gathered, fastened them to a strap upon his shoulder, seized his assegai, and started off. The rest drew closer in, enjoyed their supper, lighted up several additional fires as a protection from attack, and laid themselves down under the bushes to sleep.

The missing Bechuana was a Batloka, and the evidence went to show that the poor fellow had been compelled to rest so often and so long from his weakness, hunger, and sore feet, that he had fallen far into the rear, and, missing his way, had strayed into a rocky valley full of bushes that were notoriously the haunt of lions. Here no doubt he had been pounced upon and killed, for the brother had not gone far before he could trace the spot where the proper path had been left, and proceeding onwards he soon observed a lion's footprints in the sand. Instead of turning back, he had apparently caught sight of his brother's stick, straw hat, and



THE BECHUANA FINDS THE REMAINS OF HIS BROTHER.

gourd bottle, lying on the ground, and, trusting to his assegai, had resolved to venture on alone.

“But what was an assegai,” exclaimed Shebor, “in the face of a lion who had just tasted human blood?”

It was clear that before he reached his brother's corpse the lion had sprung from its concealment, and secured him as a second victim.

Finding next morning that both the men were absent the whole party was in consternation, too truly fearing the worst. They applied for help at a Barolong farm close at hand, and, following the tracks, were not long in discovering the two mangled bodies close to each other. The marks on the ground were quite distinct, and left no doubt that a lion had just quitted the spot. Probably it had only been scared away by their own approach, and they determined to continue their chase. After they had made their way for about 500 yards along the bank, they caught sight of a tawny object in a thicket just ahead. They hardly dared to hope that it was the creature of which they were in pursuit; but simultaneously a number of them fired, and great was their triumph when they discovered amongst the bushes the carcass of a huge lion pierced by six bullets.

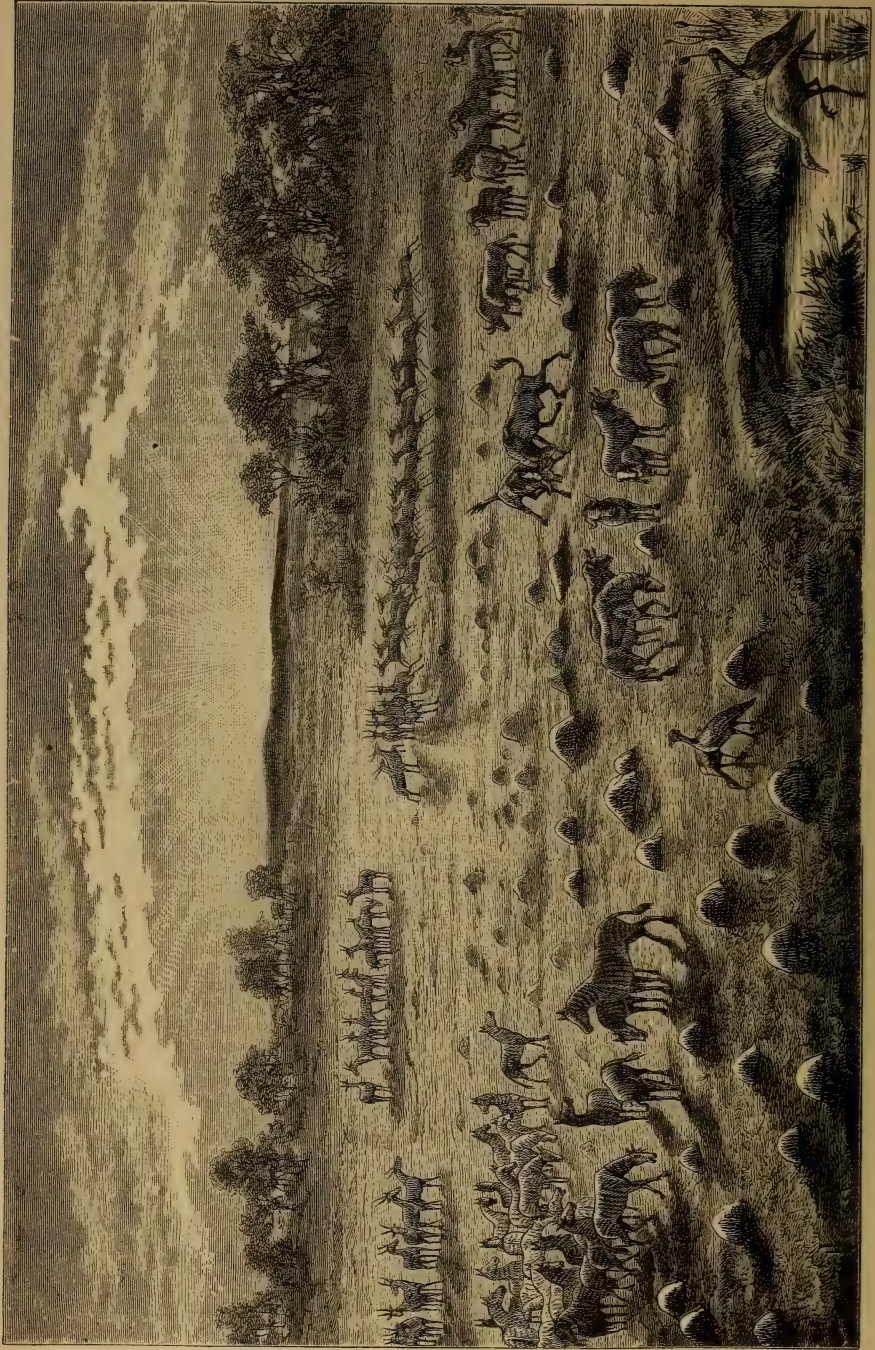
Such was the substance of Shebor's narrative, which he told with much energy and many gesticulations. It had its due effect in inducing us to take every precaution on our way to our next encampment on the slope, about three miles from Konana.

The next morning was again very fine and bright, and the golden sunbeams that penetrated the foliage above our heads awakened the feathered tribe betimes to commence their usual concert. Small song-birds were especially numerous, as well as various kinds of shrikes, and the *Tockus flavirostris*.

For two reasons our progress all day was very slow. Not only were our bullocks so weary that they required continual intervals of rest, but the bushwood was so dense that we felt the necessity of being very cautious. We did not, however, catch sight of a single lion; and, in due time, found ourselves once more upon comparatively open country.

It turned out a gorgeous day, and I am sure that none of us will forget the view upon which we gazed across the table-land. To a sportsman, and still more to a student of animal life, such days must ever remain engraven on the memory; they atone for the discomforts which have been endured in the past; they explain the longing which arises to revisit former haunts.

On reaching the top of the plateau, we looked across a vast plain, extending for at least twenty miles to the north and south, bounded on the east by mimosa groves. Except around the pools where the grass grew high, the plain was covered with a rich carpet of new green sward, thickly studded with brown ant-hills, and forming the habitat of numerous sorts of game. Dark-brown, light-brown, tawny, yellow, motley, and



WILD ANIMALS ON THE FLAINS.

black, were the robes in which a fanciful nature had bedecked her children. There were striped gnus and black gnus, blessbocks and hartebeests, springbocks and zebras; some were grazing, others gambolling, whilst here and there a herd would stalk solemnly along in single file, as though wrapped in meditation. Several herds of blessbocks stood in long rows cropping the pasturage, and quite near to us was a group of nearly 150 zebras, wending their way in a wide curve slowly to the south. In smaller bands were hartebeests innumerable; black gnus, in herds varying from ten head to eighty, had taken up their position near the bushes; and between them and the zebras were springbock gazelles, far too many to be counted. Nor were birds wanting to add to the animation of the scene. There were great bustards (*Eupodotis Kaffra* and *Kori*); there were two of the lesser bustards that I have already mentioned. There were chenalopex, ducks, plovers, ibises, cranes, and many others; their rich plumage and graceful forms as they rose in the air, or hovered just above the ground, contributing largely to the general charm.

I had seen much of the animal life of South Africa during my first journey, but I had never witnessed anything to compare with this; it exceeded all that imagination could depict, and appeared to me enough to transform the most indifferent into a keen lover of nature. For a full hour we feasted our eyes upon the prospect before us, quite forgetting the necessities of our weary cattle. So fascinated

were we with the scene that we resolved to make our encampment where we were for several days.

Connected with another, this plain extends to the upper Harts River on the east, to the Maritana on the north, and nearly as far as Mamusa on the south. It covers an enormous area, the greater part of it belonging to King Montsua. It has no perceptible slope, and it is only close to the river-banks that the rain gets carried off at all; consequently, its surface holds numerous salt-pans varying in size, besides many shallow depressions, always full of water in the rainy season. The salt-pans, it would seem, have a great deal to do with the wonderful way in which the game thrives.

In one of these depressions we chose the site of our encampment, about three miles from the spot where we had stood gazing at the view. The zebras and the blessbocks were the first to take flight as our waggon proceeded, and some of the herds made their way through the thickets in the glades, and scampered off to the adjoining flat.

We could distinctly hear the lowing of the gnu-bulls as they led their herds to drink, and we determined that on the following evening we would take our stand and watch for them by one of the rain-pools. In the morning we made a preliminary attempt at a *battue* on the southern end of the plain, but without any success. Pit and F. took a wrong direction, and consequently left a gap between us of about 360 yards, through which the game made an escape.



BAROLONGS CHASING ZEBRAS.

Returning to the waggon, we found some Baro-longs, who had come from Konana, and were on their way to one of the mimosa groves, where some of their companions were already waiting for them, for a *battue* of their own. They offered us their assistance, but as it was my object to observe the different kinds of game, rather than to kill a number of them, I declined to avail myself of their help.

As night drew on Boly and I set out to the separate spots upon which we had previously fixed, intending to make ourselves during our observations as comfortable as we could in some small holes in the ground. I contrived to creep into my hiding-place without rousing any birds from the water, a circumstance that, however trifling it might seem to be, was really of great moment, as the clatter made by a number of birds startled suddenly, and rising on the wing, is quite enough to make the larger game aware of danger and avoid the spot.

The night was rather dark, but in the north a storm was travelling eastwards, and repeated flashes of lightning gleamed across the sky. Except for an occasional cackle or twitter from some birds on the water, the silence was almost unbroken; several times I thought I could hear the low growl of gnus, but probably it was the suggestion of my imagination; once too I felt sure that I caught a sound as of a dog lapping in the stream, but though I strained my eyes I could discern nothing,

and could only conjecture that a stray jackal might have approached the water to leeward of me.

Patiently I waited on, until at last there was no doubt that I could really distinguish the sound for which I had been listening. Raising my head and



GNU-HUNTING BY NIGHT.

laying my ear upon a bare place on the ground, I heard the heavy thud of a herd of gnus tramping along a game-track. Full of expectation I crouched down again. When next I looked up, I was aware of the lightning in the north being much more vivid than before. Soon I was able to hear the grunting

of the approaching herd, and had not long to wait before I made out one of the gnus on the opposite side of the pool; it came along the water's edge some way towards me, then turning round, it retreated a little distance, returning almost directly, accompanied by several others. They all stood for a considerable time without moving, but the leader, followed by another of the herd, at length began cautiously to descend to the sandy shore. As the creature stood directly in front of me, it was so foreshortened that I could see nothing of it but its head. As well as the darkness would permit I took my aim straight at the skull, and fired; the crack of the rifle was followed by a distinct crash of the bullet, and I was sure I had hit my mark; without paying any attention to the rest of the herd, I rushed out to secure my victim; but my search was all in vain; I groped about with my gun-barrel, but to no purpose; I was so certain that I had struck the creature that I was quite bewildered at its escape, and should have persevered long in looking for it if the increasing vividness of the lightning had not warned me of the impending storm, and induced me to return.

On arriving at the waggon, I was disconcerted at finding that Boly, who had set out with me, had not come back, and supposing that he had missed his way, I sent F. some distance up the slope with a lighted fire-brand, hoping that it might serve to guide him in the right direction; but although the beacon was brandished until the great rain-drops fell and

extinguished it, there was nothing to be ascertained about Boly. The wind had now risen to a hurricane, and brought upon us a most furious storm. Although our position in the hollow had the advantage of sheltering us in some degree from the violence of the tempest, it had the disadvantage of receiving all the torrents that rushed down from the flats above, and we were rendered wretchedly uncomfortable by the in-pouring flood. However, it was not so much the discomfort we endured as the anxiety about our missing companion that engrossed our minds; we felt so perplexed and baffled that we could talk and think of nothing else, and yet we were powerless to aid him. The storm was increasing, flash following on flash, and thunder-clap rolling after thunder-clap, and the rain beat so heavily upon the waggon-tilt that it was only by shouting at the top of our voices that we could make each other hear. The temperature, which all day had been very high, became suddenly checked, and a cold chill made us shiver again in our damp clothes.

The storm lasted for hours, and by the time that the wind abated, and the rain ceased, we were all very fatigued. It was indispensable that we should have a little repose, but we hardly allowed ourselves a couple of hours' rest before we were ready, by daybreak, to make what search we could for our missing friend. I sent one of the servants in the likeliest direction, and he had not gone many hundred yards, when he fell in with Boly making

his way towards the waggon. He was covered with dirt from head to foot, and was as pitiable-looking an object as could be imagined; but although he was trembling with cold, and begrimed with mud, he was carrying a gun as bright as when he had started. He had not much to tell; in order to avoid the fury of the storm he had crept into a hole by the side of an ant-hill, where he had made the best of things all night through, but in order to keep his gun clean and ready for all emergencies, he had wrapped it in his jacket, which he had taken off for the purpose.

On the morning of the 29th I took a stroll, and brought back a hyæna-skull; this was placed along with some skulls of gnus, blessbocks, and springbocks that we had collected already since we had made our sojourn here.

At mid-day we started again, going to the eastward with the object of getting into the road leading from Taung to Molema's Town, whence I should proceed again to the north. After going about six miles we rested in a mimosa grove, where we fell in with some Barolongs. We passed a great number of deserted huts, round which the bones of animals were heaped in piles; to account for such an accumulation the slaughter must have been prodigious. Curious in the matter of pathological deformities, I turned the heaps over, but found the bones nearly all broken; the horns were perfect with the exception of two which had been pierced by bullets, the wounds having healed and a fresh horny substance

having formed in the apertures. I likewise found a pointed piece of horn, pierced with holes and attached to a thong, used by the natives for dressing leather.

When it grew dark we pitched our camp under some acacias on a hill near a salt lake, which was



DESERTED HUNTING-PLACE OF THE BAROLONGS.

itself quite dry, but had some fresh water-springs on the bank supplying what we required for drinking. Wandering about, I found some more empty huts, and some more collections of bones. Observing that there were plenty of hares, guinea-fowl, partridges, and duykerbocks about, I made up my

mind to remain in the place for a whole day, and had every reason to be satisfied with my decision, for the weather was lovely, and the sport so successful that by the next evening my scientific collection was richer by a variety of bird-skins, snakes, insects, and crustaceans, as well as by a considerable



EGYPTIAN GOOSE ON MIMOSA-TREE.

number of plants. The rest of the party brought me back from their excursion some interesting birds, chiefly bee-eaters, black and small grey shrikes, and plovers.

The capture of a wild goose (*Chenalopez*), which I considered a great prize, gave me a good deal of trouble. The hill where we were stopping was at

the western corner of the salt-pan, the northern and southern banks of which were bounded by other hills of the same character; between us and the hill to the north was a valley by which the rain descends from the upper plains; but so partial had been the storm that had inundated us two days before, that here, at a distance of hardly a dozen miles, no sign of water was to be traced. Every now and then I heard the cackle which I recognized as that of the Egyptian goose; but, although I had the advantage of a high position, I could not succeed in getting sight of the bird at all. Persevering, however, for a long time, at length I espied it perched on a bough of a withered mimosa. My gun was loaded with only small shot, so that it was useless for me to fire unless I could get very much closer; this required no little caution, but by taking off my boots, and making my way barefoot over the stony water-course, I succeeded in placing myself in a good position behind some bushes. The goose continued sitting quite upright upon the same branch, which I afterwards found nearly overhung its nest at the bottom of the trunk. Finding myself within sixty yards, I took my aim, and the handsome skin of my victim was soon on its way to my rapidly-increasing collection.

To the saltpan I gave the name of "Chuai Jungmann," or Jungmann's salt lake; its geological formation is similar to the Vaalstone at Bloemhof, consisting of blocks of greenstone of about three cubic feet.

After sundown we proceeded a little on our way, and spent the night on an immense plain, which bore evident tokens of a long drought; the ground was cracked, the herbage crumbled at a touch, and the fleeting herds of springbucks raised great clouds of dust. The deficiency of water made us put our best foot forward, and during the next day we got over eighteen miles; there was no game to induce us to loiter on the way, and we were only too glad to find a hollow full of water, where we could halt for the night.

On the morning of the 1st of December we were surprised by a visit from a Boer, who had settled in the neighbourhood. From him we ascertained that we had now reached the western boundary of the Transvaal. He said that he was anxiously waiting the arrival of President Burgers, who he hoped would give him some relief from the annoyances to which he was perpetually exposed on the part of the Barolongs.

Some of the white-thorned mimosas on the plain were in full bloom, and covered with hundreds of small globular blossoms of a bright yellow colour and pleasant fragrance. These shrubs sometimes grow eighteen feet high; their flowers are tender and sensitive, often containing many varieties of rose-beetles (*Cetoniidæ*), and some Longicorns marked with red bands. Amongst so many sorts of shrubs, I was surprised to find that there were only two that seemed to be much resorted to by insects; these had their branches often thickly coated with the

larvæ, more than an inch long, of the great cicada, of which the sonorous chirping could be heard on all sides. At our approach the insects would rise with a loud buzz, and settle again upon some adjacent mimosa with a shock that could be truly said to be audible. Brilliant leaf-beetles were also to be seen, and great steel-blue wasps were hovering round the bushes, catching flies; whilst numbers of humble-bees buzzed about in their busy fashion, collecting food for themselves and their broods, that were quartered in the forsaken ant-hills.

The South African spring-time had now settled with all its glory on these districts of the Upper Molapo, and all the inferior animals seemed roused to new life and vigour beneath its influence; to them its beneficent breath imparted fresh animation and enjoyment; to the unreasoning offspring of nature it seemed to be the herald of peace and pleasure; only amongst men, the lords of creation, did its return revive thoughts of discord, fire, and deeds of blood.

A short drive on the morning of the 2nd brought us to the village of the Makuba, on the southern or left shore of the Molapo,² belonging to Molema's Town. For the first fifteen miles of the river-course the valley is very narrow and enclosed by steep cliffs, but further on, where the plateau slopes to the west, it becomes much flatter. Here it was that we had to cross it, and we made our halt on the right-hand bank, near some wartebichi

² Molapo = river.

mimosas. Towards sunset we saw Molema's Town lying in front of us on a moderate slope, with woods in the background; on its eastern side the town is bounded by two interesting rocky heights, and between one of these and the stream stands the commodious Mission-house, built in the native style, belonging to the Wesleyan Missionary Society.

The little river is not more than six or seven yards wide, but the rocks and the numerous acacias and willows that adorn the hillside in the spaces between the farms, combine to make the position of Molema's Town one of the most pleasing of all the native settlements of Central South Africa. The farmsteads are all detached, and all provided with enclosures, within which the pointed roofs, overgrown with calabash-gourds, are quite picturesque.

The many waggons about the place were the index of a thriving population, a circumstance to be attributed very much to the fact that King Montsua has prohibited the sale of brandy in the country, an order which Molema, the governor, or sub-chief of the town, has strenuously enforced. Another source of prosperity has been the introduction of European cereals by former missionaries.

Molema, it may be mentioned by the way, is a Christian and a preacher. It pleased me very much to find that he has forbidden the felling of any trees in the precincts of the town; and we had scarcely made our encampment when a native, as the representative of the police-court, came to apprise us of

the rule, at the same time offering to assign us adequate pasturage for our cattle.

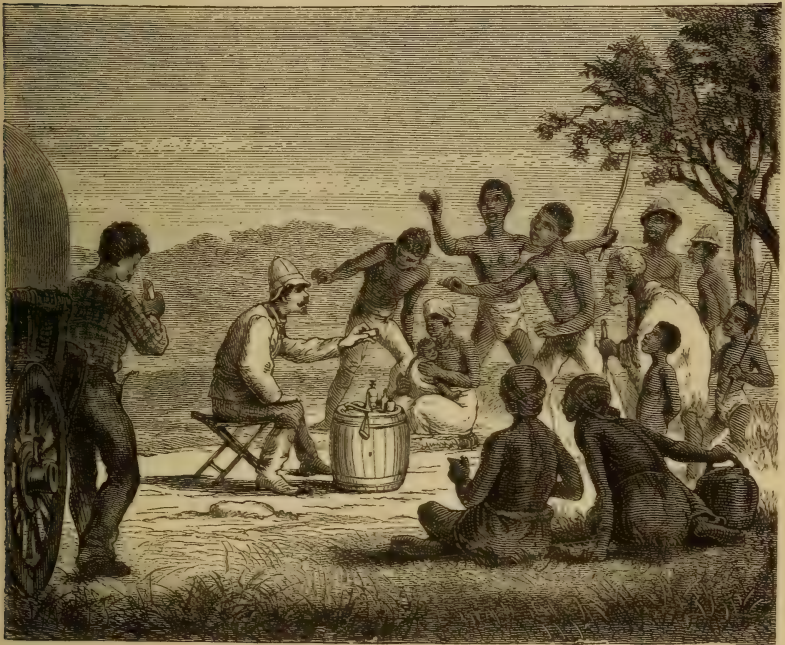
I was contemplating calling on Mr. Webb, the missionary; but before I had positively made up my mind, a fair stout man leading a little girl by the hand came out of the Mission-house towards me, and, as I anticipated, introduced himself to me. We engaged in a long conversation, and he gave me much information about the locality. He told me that Montsua was now residing at Moshaneng, a town in the province of his royal ally Khatsisive, the ruler of the Banquaketse. He was resolved, however, to settle in Poolfontein, where the Transvaal Government (probably for the purpose of forestalling the independent Barolong chiefs) had placed its Barolong subjects. This was a great annoyance to Montsua, and the real motive of his desire to leave Moshaneng, and to build himself a new residence elsewhere.³

The Mission-house was furnished with the barest necessities, as, in the extremely unsettled state of affairs, Mr. Webb considered his residence likely to be only temporary; moreover, Molema, being himself a preacher, was by no means well disposed to white missionaries at all. Both Mr. Webb and his wife, who appeared to be an energetic helper in his labours, advised me to make my way as quickly as possible to Moshaneng.

Mr. Webb now went to inform Molema of my

³ Montsua has subsequently done this, and has offered the English Government the jurisdiction of his territory.

arrival, and brought him back with him to the Mission-house. Molema was an old man, suffering from asthma. He expressed himself very delighted to see me, and said that he had not seen a Nyaka (doctor) since Nyaka Livingstone. He was very anxious that I should give him a molemo (a dose) that would



DISPENSING DRUGS IN THE OPEN.

relieve him of his troublesome cough, and enable him to breathe more freely; inviting me to go and see him on the following morning, he promised that if I would stay for a few days he would make me a present of a fat sheep.

In an excursion that I made up the country, I

observed that wherever there was a stratum of mould, it never failed to be sown with kaffir corn. I noticed a good many specimens of tropical vegetation, the first I had seen since leaving Grahamstown; but, on the other hand, I saw a large number of plants distinctively belonging to the temperate zones, such as *Campanula*, *Saponaria*, *Veronica*, and some umbelliferous *Euphorbiaceæ*; out on the plains the grass stood four feet high. I shot a heron and several finches, including two fire-finches; also two spurred plovers, which probably I should not have noticed but for their peculiar cry of "tick-tick." The women who were working in the fields were much cleaner than the Batlapins; and after I left Molema's Town I was satisfied that these northern Barolongs, as they are called, are altogether of a higher grade not only than the Batlapins, but than the Mokalana, Marokana, or south-western Barolongs; in agriculture, however, and especially in cattle-breeding, they are far surpassed by the south-eastern Barolongs, who reside in and about Thaba Unshu, which contains over 10,000 inhabitants, the people living to a large extent upon their horse-breeding, which cannot be successfully carried on either in the Molapo district or in the Transvaal, on account of the horse-plague.

I did not omit next day to pay my visit to Molema. The chief received me in his little courtyard, and after introducing me to his wife and sons, whose apartments were close at hand, sent for some wooden stools for myself and Mr. Webb, who

accompanied me. When we were seated, he begged me to give him the latest news from Cape Colony and the diamond-fields; he made inquiries about the proceedings of the English Government in the south, complained bitterly of the encroachments of the Boers in the east, and wound up by asking me whether I was an Englishman or a Boer. When Mr. Webb tried to explain to him that I was a Bohemian, he looked completely mystified; and having asked me my name, he made some old Barolongs who were sitting in the courtyard repeat both my name and my country over and over again, until the two words were sufficiently impressed upon his memory. Before I left I made him a promise that I would never return to his country without paying him a visit, and he assured me that I should always find a welcome.

Before I left Mr. Webb gave me two letters of introduction, one to Mr. Martin, a merchant residing in Moshaneng, the other to Montsua, which Mr. Martin would read and interpret to him.

On the 5th we started off northwards towards the foot of a wooded hill. Without deviating far from our proper route I had many opportunities of adding to my entomological collection; amongst other coleoptera I secured a large and handsome tortoise-beetle that I had never seen before, having its wing-sheaths dotted with greenish-gold and brown spots; its habitat apparently was on one of the commonest South African nightshades. The nest of the sociable weaver-birds (*Philetærus socius*) did

not fail also to attract my attention, abounding as they did in the camel-acacias along the way.

The day's march was brought to a close in a



NEST OF WEAVER-BIRDS.

depression near a brook flowing north-eastwards towards the Taung or Notuany River; and next morning, after making our way through a regular underwood of acacias, we came to a Makalahari

village, the population of which was composed almost exclusively of Montsua's shepherds and hunters. They gave us a most discouraging description of the road to Moshaneng, and declared it all but impossible for us to accomplish the journey to the royal residence with oxen so weak as ours. The road was indeed in a deplorable condition; the sand was very deep, and sorely tried the strength of our poor animals; the woods were full of holes a foot or more in depth, that had been rain-pools in the rainy season, and, besides this, the dust rose in clouds from the sand-drifts, parching our mouths and throats, and making our faces smart considerably.

In one of the smaller hollows now overgrown with grass, I found hundreds of a glistening blue Litta, marked with a rusty red spot, a species which I never met with but once again when I was on my subsequent journey in some woods not unlike these, about fifteen miles to the north of Shesheke. I also shot a buzzard of the kind known as the honey-buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*) that was hovering over me.

The state of the road next day showed no improvement; and when we came to two salt-pans, nearly dry, where the sand was some fourteen inches deep, we almost despaired of getting across, but by the aid of various expedients, and by the exercise of much perseverance, we managed to reach the opposite side, where we halted to enjoy the rest that we felt both man and beast had so hardly earned. In the woods we found two kinds of

edible berries, one of which was the brownish-red fruit of the bluebush, used for shot, the other being a yellow berry something like our currant, called wild pomegranate by the Boers, and "geip" by the Korannas, by whom it is greatly relished.

On our way we saw in the distance a ridge of hills running transverse to our path, which some Barolongs that we met told us were Malau's heights; to the highest summit, which did not appear hitherto to have had any special distinction, I gave the name of Huss Hill. Reaching the saddle of the ridge we camped amongst some groups of shrubs overgrown with bryony, cucurbitæ, and other creepers. In some spreading acacias we observed shrikes, both long-tailed and black-and-white; large turtle-doves, too, seemed by no means rare, and for the first time I heard a note which I fancied must proceed from a *Psittacus*. Following the sound I was gratified by seeing a pair of the small grey parrots (*Psittacus Ruppelii*) with green breasts, and yellow spots on the head and wings. They are found beyond the Zambesi, and live in pairs in hollow trees.

As we went on we had alternately to descend steepish valleys, and to climb stony hills. Again we had to experience a lack of water; for ourselves, indeed, we were fortunate in being able to get some milk from a few Barolong people we chanced to see, but the deficiency was sadly felt by our poor panting bullocks.

Arriving at a wide valley running north by east,

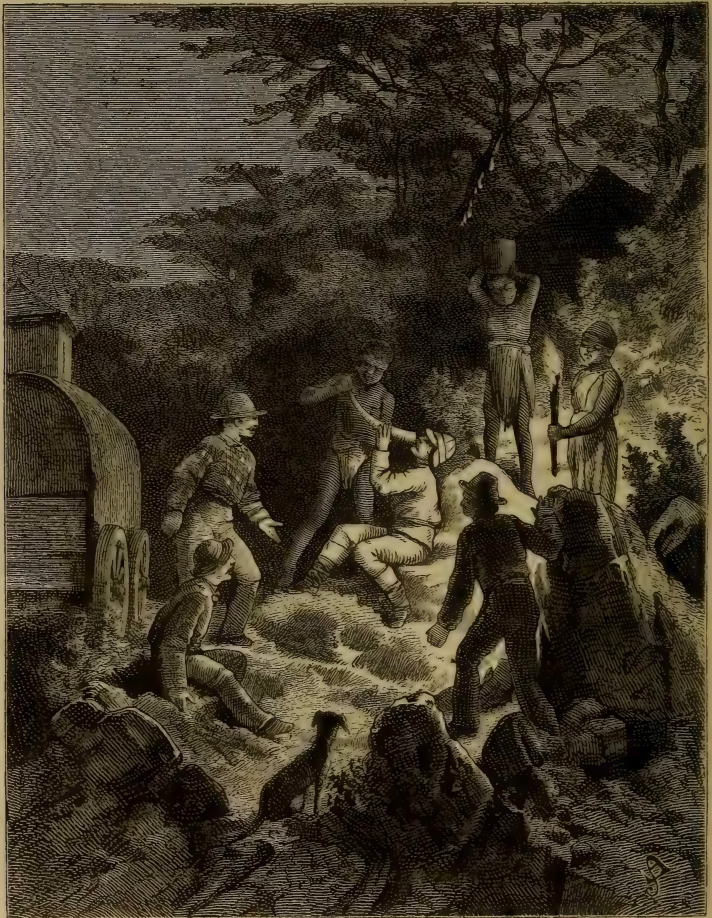
under the last spur of Malau's heights, we were relieved by the springing up of a cool breeze, which seemed to prognosticate rain. Our anticipations in this matter were not disappointed, and, before we had toiled on much farther, a refreshing shower came down, allowing us to fill all our vessels, and the bullocks to quench their thirst.



COLLECTING RAIN-WATER.

It had been my intention to push on so as to reach Moshaneng that day; but, coming to a valley where the pools were full of rainwater, and which looked very pleasantly sheltered, we were induced to stay there for the night, although it was about four miles short of the town.

In the woods were some fine trees, known amongst the Boers as beech, as well as a shrub erroneously called wild syringa. There were also wild olives



A REFRESHING DRAUGHT.

and karee trees, mohatla and marethwa bushes; some shrubs with winged seed-vessels, like the maple, several kinds of mimosas (*Acacia detinens*,

Acacia giraffa, *Acacia horrida*), and, on the hills, some aloes, that differed from those which I had seen further south. I shot a great grey lory, that from its cry is called the “go-away” by the English, whilst by the Boers it is known as the “grote



ROYAL VISITORS.

Mausevogel.” It builds right at the top of trees, whence it peers about at anything that excites its curiosity; whenever it utters its frightful cry its crest stands perfectly erect. I likewise brought down a brown fork-tailed kite, and two yellow-beaked hornbills. On the 11th I made some short, but not

unsuccessful, excursions, and secured, amongst other booty, some parrots, six lories, some widow-birds, hornbills, two sorts of cuckoos, a small red-and-green woodpecker with a red crest, and some shrikes.

We had now come about seventy miles from Molema's Town, having, about half way, entered upon the territory of the Banquaketse, in latitude $25^{\circ} 10'$ south. In the course of the afternoon we were honoured by a visit from some of the magnates from Moshaneng. A covered two-wheeled waggon, drawn by four horses, was seen skirting the wood, and making straight towards us. Our black man, Stephan, went to the horses' heads, whilst the occupants, four natives, alighted. The first to step out was a young man of about seven-and-twenty, who introduced himself as Mobili, the son of a Bechuana chief. He had known my friend F. in Kimberley, where his English education and knowledge of the language had for a time procured him an appointment as interpreter in the Courts of Justice. He was now, however, living as a South African gentleman, and was on a round of visits to several Bechuana chiefs. He had come from the king of the Bakuenas only a few days previously. Having shaken hands with F., he proceeded to introduce the three others. "These," he said, "are two of the most distinguished Bechuana kings. Montsua, king of the Barolongs, a wealthy and powerful tribe, and Khatsisive, king of the Banquaketse; and this," he added, pointing to the third, "is

Khatsisive's Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Banquaketse kingdom."

Montsua, a plump, jovial-looking man, of about fifty, inspired me with confidence immediately. Khatsisive, who was tall and scraggy, looked, as did also his Chancellor, as if he knew how to suit his furrowed countenance to circumstances. They were all in European costume, Khatsisive wearing a long overcoat and chimney-pot hat, while his Minister sported a "Menschikoff."

Mobili and Pit acted as interpreters, and during the conversation that ensued we were closely scrutinized by our visitors. Montsua assured me that I was very welcome to the neighbourhood of his residence at Moshaneng, explaining that he was not now living on his own territory, but on that of Khatsisive, his friend and ally, having quitted the Molapo some time since on account of the oppression of the Boers. He was so weary of the annoyances he suffered, that he had thoroughly made up his mind to leave Moshaneng, and to establish himself either at Poolfontein or on the Lothlakane, where he should be pleased if at any time I would pay him a visit.

I was very closely interrogated as to the object of my journey. In reply I exhibited some birdskins, which were regarded with some astonishment. Mobili interpreted my explanation of the process by which the skins were preserved; but the way in which the king kept shaking his head implied that it all surpassed his comprehension; and when

I advised him to be careful in handling them, as there was some poison used in preparing the plumage, he uttered a low cry of alarm, and instantly dropped the specimen he had in his hand. Mobili had translated my word "poison" by the words "molemo maschive" (i. e. bad medicine), which startled the king, as there is nothing of which the Bechuanas live in greater dread than subtle poison, even applying the name to medicines that fail to effect a remedy. Montsua and his companions were certainly a good deal disconcerted by my communication, for they turned up their coat-sleeves and began vigourously rubbing their fingers against the sand on the ground. They were very glad to avail themselves of the soap and water and towel, for which I immediately sent; but nothing seemed to make them quite comfortable, notwithstanding my assurance that the poison could have no injurious effect upon the human skin.

After shaking hands with us all round, and bestowing a friendly nod upon the servants, the two rulers over many hundreds of square miles remounted their waggon and prepared to start. Mobili had just taken the reins when King Montsua laid his left hand upon his shoulder, and with his right beckoned to me. As soon as I approached he made Mobili ask me what I had done with the "rumela," the letter of introduction that I had brought for him from Mr. Webb. I fetched the letter at once, as well as the other addressed to Mr.

Martin, which I asked might be delivered for me; at the same time I expressed my surprise that the existence of the letters should already be known at Moshaneng.

Montsua laughed, and said,—

“I knew all about the letters three days ago. While you were asleep two Barolongs came over from Molema’s Town; from them I heard of your arrival, and of the good effect your molemo had had upon Molema.”

On the afternoon of the 14th, I completed my journey to Moshaneng, the way lying through cultivated country, bounded on the east by an open plain, on the west by rocks, and on the south by wooded heights, which were the northern chain of Malau’s ridge, overlooking the town.

Malau’s ridge may be considered as the south-central portion of the Banquaketse heights, which are connected by the Lekhutsa and Makarupa hills with the western mountain groups in central South Africa.⁴

⁴ I consider that there are three distinct mountain-groups in Central South Africa; the Magaliesbergen in the east; the Marico heights in the west; and the hills in Matabele-land in the north.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM MOSHANENG TO MOLOPOLOLE.

King Montsua and Christianity—Royal gifts—The Banquaketse highlands—Signs of tropical vegetation—Hyæna-dogs—Ruins of Mosilili's Town—Rock-rabbits—A thari—Molopolole.

THE southern part of Moshaneng belonged to Molema and his Barolongs, and (excepting the ruined church and Mr. Martin's house) contained no buildings in the European style of architecture. The native huts were all of pure Bechuana construction, and owing to the limited space, were packed very closely together, although in the Baharutse quarter, separated by a valley and a stream, the farmsteads were much less crowded. I should estimate the population of the entire town to be about 7000; but out of this number nearly 1000 would be fluctuating, many of the inhabitants working occasionally for lengthened periods at the diamond-fields, or cultivating land at a distance.

The king's residence stood in the western part near the river-bank, and was surrounded by a courtyard containing two huts apiece for his five wives.

Here, as with not a few of the Bechuana tribes where Christian missionaries have begun to labour, a good proportion of the young people have professed to embrace the new doctrines, while the elders have clung to their heathen institutions. It soon became evident to Montsua that, although circumcision was not uniformly discarded, the young men and young women were reluctant to take part in the accustomed marriage orgies, and that many of the established festivities were very thinly attended. Amongst these ancient ceremonials was a dance known as the reed-dance, performed through the towns by a number of men in procession, blowing with such vehemence upon reed-pipes, that nearly always one or more of them would either drop down dead during the progress, or would subsequently die from the acute emphysema of the lungs brought on by the exertion. With reference to this time-honoured performance, Montsua gave notice that he should only undertake not to interfere with the "bathu ba lehuku,"¹ on condition that they all joined in it as heretofore. The dance was ordered by authority, but the converts, instigated by Molema, Montsua's own brother, refused to obey the king's injunction. Molema was himself urged on by Yan, the present black Barolong Christian preacher.

Baffled on this occasion, by the advice of his rain-doctor Montsua next required that the followers

¹ According to Mr. Mackenzie, the bathu ba lehuku are "the people of the word;" the people who receive God's word.

of the new faith should take parts in two ceremonies connected with rain-magic ; first, in the letshulo-hunt appointed by the rain-doctors for the capture of certain wild animals, parts of which were employed in the incantations ; and, secondly, in turning up a plot of ground for the service of the doctors, which was afterwards considered consecrated, and called "tsimo ea pulta," the garden of the rain. To both these demands the converts again resolutely refused to submit, giving the king to understand that while they were ready to submit to any other proof of their loyalty, since they had become "bathu ba lehuku" their consciences would not allow them to participate in the idolatrous usages of their forefathers.

Again thwarted, the king was driven to devise some other measures for bringing the recusants to obedience ; the constitutional form of his government, and the large numbers of the adherents of the new creed both making it difficult to bring the offenders to justice. He soon tried another scheme. On the following Saturday, when both Molema and Yan had gone away into the country, he issued an order, and caused it to be circulated through the town, that no person would be allowed to attend the church on the next day. The women took up the matter ; aware that Christianity raised them to an equality with their husbands, they came to the unanimous decision that no notice was to be taken of the king's order. Accordingly, Sunday came, and at the hour of service not a member of the congregation was absent from his usual place. The

king, perhaps, might have heard the singing from his own house; or perhaps there were plenty to inform him what was going on; at any rate, he got into a towering passion, and, seizing a long knife, rushed off to the church, which he entered just as one of the men, in Molema's absence, was delivering a



BAROLONG WOMEN AT MOSHANENG.

prayer of thanksgiving. His appearance naturally caused no little commotion amongst the worshippers, and in the midst of the excitement, he bellowed out a peremptory order that they should all disperse. One of the women calmly confronted him, and said that the "bathu ba lehuku" must finish their ser-

vice first. Enraged at the open defiance of his authority, and incensed by the temerity of the woman, he made such vehement and indiscriminate thrusts with his formidable weapon, that he quite succeeded in clearing the building.

Amongst the converts were one of his own daughters and her husband; at first he simply forbade her to leave her own house, but when he ascertained that she was visited there by one of the new community, who joined in hymns and prayers with her, he took her away from her husband, brought her back to his own residence, and obliged her to revert to the heathen custom of wearing nothing but a leather apron.

In course of time, however, as Montsua found that his opposition was of no avail, and discovered, moreover, that the converts not only remained just as faithful subjects as before, but were the most industrious and the most thriving of all his population, he grew weary of his persecution, and subsequently, when he and Molema separated, although he did not himself embrace the new faith, he so far favoured the cause of Christianity as to direct Yan, the Barolong, to continue preaching amongst the surrounding people, and to permit Molema to do the same in his town on the Molapo.²

² It was by the Wesleyan Missionary Society that Christianity was introduced among the Barolongs. At the time of my visit, in 1873, Moshaneng was the most northerly station; but now that Montsua has settled in Lo thlakane, there is no station further north than Molema's Town. Molema himself is still a

In acknowledgment of some trifling medical services that I had rendered to himself and his household, Montsua presented me with 1*l.*, and with some beautiful ostrich feathers, four black and four white, which he said were for my wife; he looked very incredulous when I told him that I did not possess a wife, and observed that I could keep the feathers until I had one. Besides this, his gratitude was so great that in return for my Snider-rifle he let me have five strong bullocks. By the assistance of Mr. Martin, and another resident merchant, I procured five more, so that with what I retained of my own, I had the satisfactory prospect of continuing my journey with a good team of fourteen.

My stay in Moshaneng was advantageous both to my ethnographical and entomological collections. I obtained a number of curiosities in the way of costumes, kiris, and other weapons, sticks branded with ornamental devices, water-vessels made from ostrich-eggs, wooden spoons and platters, and snuff-boxes made of gourd-shells or horn. One way or another, too, including duplicates, I collected as many as 350 insects, amongst which were a new cerambyx, another of the same family with black and yellow bands, and one copper-coloured and two preacher. Mr. Webb has left. Mr. Harris is the present missionary in Lothlakane. The work of the Society has borne good fruit, inasmuch as it has refined many of the habits of the Barolongs, induced the rulers to adopt more considerate measures, and by the introduction of agriculture has done much to raise the social condition of the natives.

green scarabæidæ. The dry mimosa-hedges seemed to be the favourite resort of two handsome kinds of Longicorn beetles.

When, on the morning of the 18th, I prepared to start, all the great people of Moshaneng turned out to bid me farewell; Montsua and Mr. Martin each bringing me another beautiful white feather. The king insisted on shaking hands with me over and over again, and as the last proof of his regard offered to lend me a guide as far as Molopolole, the residence of the king of the Bakuenas; although the man did not look very strong, I thought it more graceful to accept the offer.

After leaving the town, we turned first north-west, then north, crossing two rivers, the second of which was named the Koluany; we then came to a hilly country, the scenery of which, in beauty, resembled the imposing Makalaka highlands in miniature. The table-land consisted partly of bushwood, and partly of grass-land, interspersed here and there with thinly-wooded districts, and with rocky eminences sometimes eighty feet in height, composed of huge blocks of granite, generally pyramidal in form. The soil near these rugged crags was usually moist, and they were bordered with mimosas, and covered with rich vegetation, amongst which small aloes with their pink and crimson blossoms, stapelias with their dark velvet-like flowers, and cactus-like euphorbiacæ, with their wondrous shapes, shone pre-eminent, and charmed the eye not only by their intrinsic beauty, but by the pro-

fusion in which they grew in every cleft of weather-beaten rock, here peeping out from some dark hollow, and there tightly wedged between two blocks of stone. But no object on these rocky heights was so striking as the sycamores that spread their light-grey roots, now broad and flat, now thick and forked, like a network down the steep sides of the cliff, their succulent stems rising from the crevices frequently to eight or ten feet, and terminating in a crown of handsome foliage. Woodsorrels, ferns, mosses, and lichens of many kinds were abundant, and I observed several new lepidoptera and beetles; amongst the mammalia there were some small beasts of prey and a great many rock-rabbits. Towards the west, the land sloped towards a brook that, after rain, assumes the dimensions of a river; from Moshaneng it flows north by west, then north-west, and finally due north, when it joins the Molapo. The declivity is steep, and the upper part wooded, and is known to be the resort of *Hyæna brunnea* and *punctata*, as well as of the caracal and leopard.

But the extensive highlands are notoriously infested by large numbers of that most dangerous of all the South African beasts of prey, the *Canis pictus*, also called *Lycaon pictus* or *venaticus*, and ordinarily known as "the wild dog." It is one of the most rapacious and destructive animals on the face of the earth, and is a deadly enemy to all kinds of cattle. Both Montsua and Mr. Martin had warned me to be on my guard against their attacks. "Never let

your bullocks graze out at night," were Montsua's words to me, "and never let them be unguarded even by day, if you expect to bring many of them to



HYENAS AMONG THE CATTLE.

Molopolole." In size this dreaded animal is about as large as a young wolf, only more slender, and in shape it is a cross between the proteles and

hyæna. Always hunting in herds, they are especially dangerous; they attack the larger quadrupeds, oxen, elands, and hartebeests, whilst their ravages amongst sheep, goats, and wild pigs are still more destructive; they are not content with one victim, but seize a second and a third, so that the devastation they make is really frightful. They do not confine their visits to the native territory, but make their way to cultivated lands on the border of the Transvaal. They have their holes underground, and sometimes leave their quarters in winter to range over wider districts, returning in the spring. When they start on their raids, they hold their noses high in the air, and if unsuccessful in discovering a scent, they divide into little groups, and disperse in various directions with their noses down to the surface of the ground. Having found the track of any wild or domestic animal, except the horse, which is too swift for them, the entire pack, yelping and baying, darts off upon the chase with such eager impetuosity, that many of them fall into the bushes, or run foul of rocks and ant-hills. Through being so small, they not unfrequently succeed in getting close to cows or antelopes before they are observed; and whilst the cow may be defending herself by her horns from the assailants in front, two or three of the voracious brutes will be biting at her heels, and as many more at her belly; finding defence hopeless, the unfortunate creature will take to flight; this occasionally succeeds, and cows are from time to time seen

reaching their homes in the farmsteads with dreadful wounds all over their bodies; but if they stumble or get seized by the neck or nostrils, or bitten through their knees or in the stomach, so that the bowels protrude, it is all over with them, and they die in the most horrible agonies.

The 18th was spent in crossing the Banquaketse table-land. Everything seemed blooming in the advancing summer, and I did not see a single withered mimosa. Towards sundown we entered the valley of a sand-river, now reduced to a mere rivulet, called the Mosupa, Masupa, or Moshupa; it was said to join the Taung, an affluent of the Notuany. The river-bed and its banks were partially strewn with gigantic blocks of granite that lay in immense flats on the left-hand shore, their upper surfaces being slightly hollowed, forming natural reservoirs. A few hundred yards to the right the stream made a sudden turn to the north-east, and just in the bend rose a fantastic crag connected with two others of inferior height, and formed of huge masses of rock.

As we descended from the high ground towards the valley, some luxuriant woodlands and shrubberies cut off any very distant view, but made some graceful scenery. The setting sun, all aglow, was just resting on the edge of the adjacent table-land, on the east of which the Masupa held its course. As the gorgeous disk became concealed, and a more equal light fell upon the scene, our eyes fell upon an object which drew from us all an involuntary expression of surprise. Had we been anywhere

but in the heart of South Africa, we should have concluded at once that we were looking upon some ancient churchyard; what we really saw were the ruins of a town, enclosed by a low stone wall. The guide whom Montsua had sent with us, in giving an account of the place, said that until the last few years it had been occupied by a branch of the Banquaketse, but that the son of the chief Mosilili, named Pilani, who was a friend of Sechele, the king of the Bakuenas, had with a number of his dependents left his father's town and Khatsisive's territory, and had settled in Sechele's new district in Molopolole; whereupon Mosilili, an old ally of Khatsisive's, finding his town half deserted, left the remainder of the residents in the lurch, and took up his abode near Kanya.

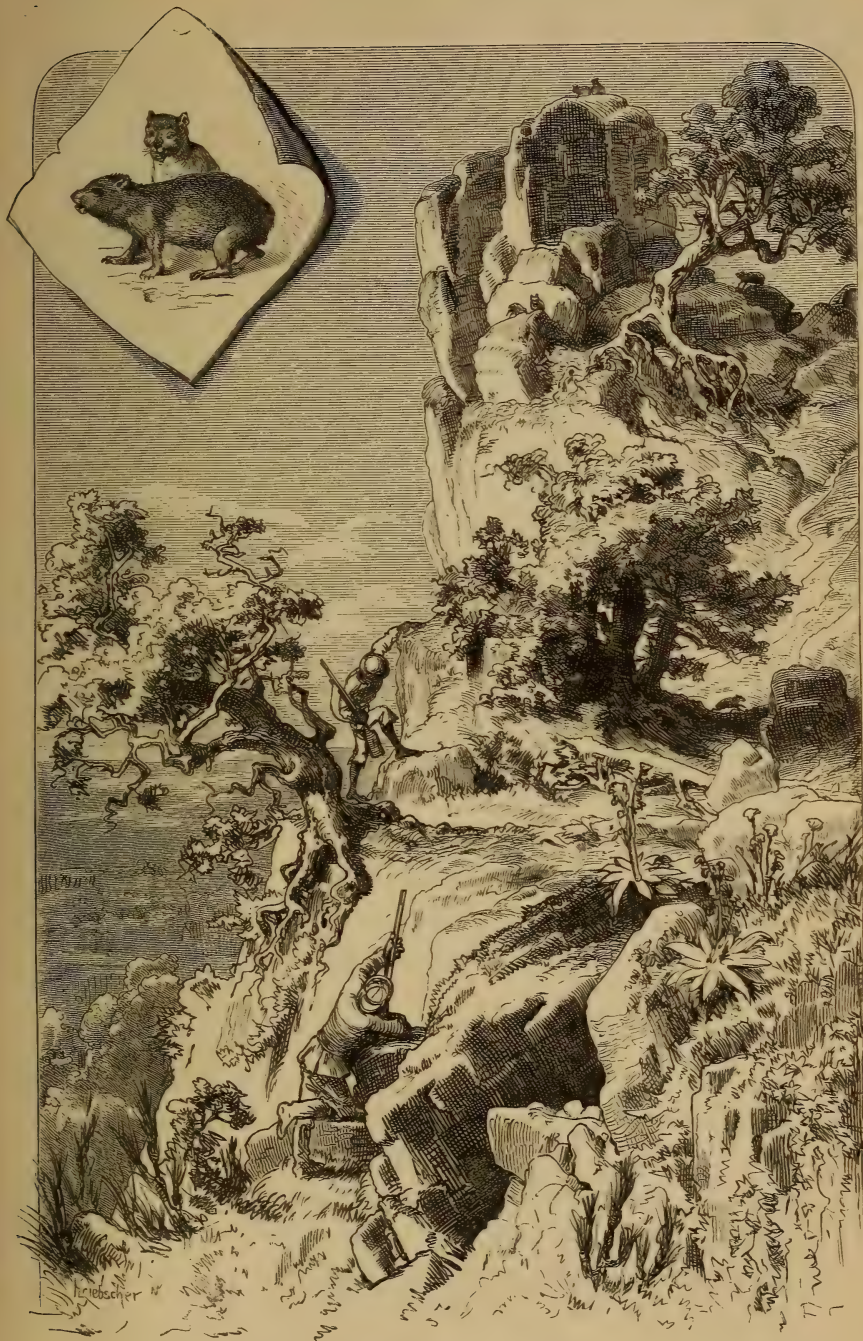
During a stroll that I took along the river, I came across some very pretty bits of scenery. The banks were high and thickly clothed with vegetation; and in the stream the slippery boulders, piled one above another, formed little cataracts and natural weirs that future settlers might well utilize, either for turning mills or irrigating meadows. In the thickets on the banks were flocks of horned guinea-fowl (*Numida coronata*), and in muddy places I saw distinct traces of otters and water-lizards.

At dinner-time we noticed on the over-hanging rocks a number of rock-rabbits, called "dossies" by the Boers. We started off for a chase. These creatures are the smallest of all extant pachydermata, and, on account of being so continually hunted by

the natives, are very shy. As long as we kept near the waggon, which was stationed at the ruins, they remained passive enough, either squatting as they watched us from the ledges of rock, or contentedly seeking roots in the bushes, and figs on the sycamores; but no sooner did we approach the foot of the crags, than they bounded away instantly into the nearest crevices.

Whilst Eberwald, F., and Stephan were shooting on the east hill, I made my way to the west, and before long spied out a rock-rabbit that seemed quite unsuspecting of my movements, and was crouching in a melancholy attitude, as if oblivious of all the affairs of itself and the rabbit-world in general. With much caution, and not without many ludicrous tumbles, which caused a good deal of amusement to Pit, who was with me, I scrambled on till I was just within range. Pit wanted me to get nearer; but, assured that my opportunity was now or never, I fired a charge of small shot straight upwards. My aim was perfectly good; the rock-rabbit rolled on to the stem of a sycamore that overhung the precipice, and fell perpendicularly several feet. We made our way, out of breath, to the foot of the tree, but were doomed to disappointment. Although the ground was all stained with the fresh blood, the creature had disappeared; we searched every nook and crevice, we investigated every corner, but were completely baffled in finding the wounded rabbit.

This *Hyrax capensis*, if it be not actually the same



HUNTING THE ROCK-RABBIT.

species as the *Hyrae abyssinicus*, is certainly very closely allied to it. It extends all over South Africa, from the south beyond the Zambesi; it generally selects rocky heights for its habitat; and, having once settled, it is extremely tenacious of its abode, not deserting it even though a farm or a village be established below. It is peculiar in its disposition, having all the appearance of being meditative, as though carefully weighing its movements before action, but withal of a savage and snarling nature. In size it is rather larger than a common rabbit; it has short ears and bright little eyes. Its fur, which is much sought after by the natives, is of a dark yellowish-brown tint. The flesh is eaten both by white men and natives; and many of the tribes, such as the Makalakas, make use of sticks armed with nails, with which they drag the animals out of their holes. Besides being hunted by men, it is preyed upon by the caracal, by the southern lynx (*Lynx pardinus*), and by the brown eagle. In spite, however, of all the persecution it suffers, it thrives wonderfully; and nothing seems to put a check upon its propagation. The young ones are often attacked by genets.

The cliffs that are steepest, and the crags that are the most rugged, are the favourite resorts of the rock-rabbit. It is not unfrequently found with a little hare, but this resides, ordinarily, more on the surface of the ground than in clefts of any depth. It loves warmth; its chief business of life, after providing itself with food, appears to be basking in

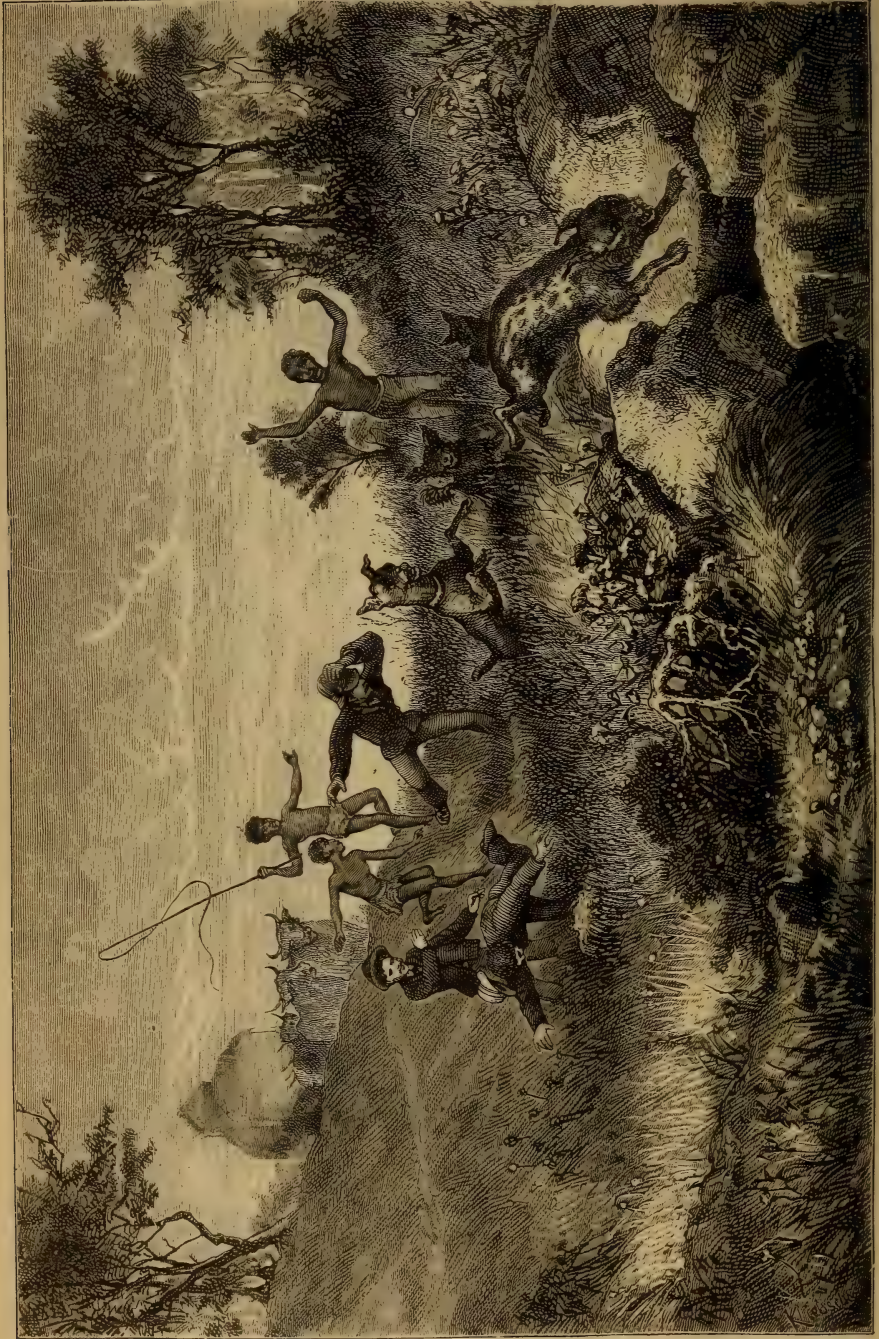
the sun; and damp winters, rare though they are on the table-land, and extreme cold, try it severely. In confinement, if it be not allowed plenty of space for moving about, or if it be shut up in any premises that are the least damp, it soon pines away; it is, however, very frequently to be seen in dwelling-houses, tied up by a piece of cord, which it does not attempt to gnaw. The price at which one can be bought varies from two to five shillings.

There is another species of rock-rabbit, one of which, although I saw a specimen, I was never able to procure. It has a foxy-red fur. I saw it in one of the limestone-funnels in the western Transvaal. Besides this, there is a smaller grey sort, found in the wooded districts of the southern part of Cape Colony, in Kaffraria, in Natal, and still further north. Of this I have seen two examples. It is said to have a shrill piping note, and to be very wild, but better able to endure damp than its brother of the woods.

As soon as we had all gathered together again after our little ramble, we made another start. Our road took us across several sandy river-beds, as well as over a great number of rain-trenches, the edges of which were overgrown with fine verdant mimosas. Near one of the trenches, our guide drew our attention to numerous hyæna and leopard-tracks, a hint to be upon our guard, which we did not neglect.

And not without reason. Our bullocks had with much difficulty just effected the passage of the Shutani stream, when the dogs gave tongue





THE AFRICAN LYNX.

furiously, and Stephan screamed out, "Bas, bas! pass up, een chut lup nack ye tu!"³

In a moment our attention was fixed upon the direction whence came the sound of an angry barking; another instant and a creature, yellowish in colour, with dark spots, bounded in front of the waggon; a moment more, and it had dashed down the slope. It was a southern lynx, known to the natives as a "thari." It looked so small, and the dogs, with Onkel at their head, were so close upon its track, that we did not wait to fetch our guns, but joined helter-skelter in the chase, rushing headlong over bushes, rocks, and every obstacle. We had not, however, a very long run; the dogs suddenly came to a halt at a mass of stone deeply embedded in the ground, where a rift about sixteen inches wide formed the entrance to a hole; the dogs stood before the gap and barked vehemently; the thari could be heard spitting savagely out of reach.

We could not spare the time to hunt out the lynx from its retreat, and with great reluctance were obliged to return to the waggon. At night, when we made our camp, I enjoined my people to keep the best look-out they could, and as an additional protection against leopards, I ordered several large fires to be lighted.

It was through thick and leafy underwood that we proceeded on our next day's journey. We met two women, whose necks and breasts were covered

³ "Master! master! take care, something is running at you!"

with many strings of beads, their arms and thighs being encircled with rings about as thick as one's finger, formed also of tiny beads; they were walking, followed by a boy, who was driving a bullock laden with their baggage. By crossing the Koluany we had entered upon the territory of Sechele, the king of the Bakuenas, who, with the exception of the two Bamangwato chiefs, owns more land than any of the Bechuana rulers.

Having made the transit of a little stream called the Malili, the bed of which was partly stony and partly sandy, we had to ascend through a forest where the sand was very deep; when we reached the top we could discern a chain of hills in the north, which seemed to be wooded. They were the central portion of the Bakuena heights, and on coming nearer we found that they were joined by another ridge of hills, high up on one of which was a white speck, like a whitewashed European building. Our guide informed us that it belonged to Molopolole, Sechele's residence. In order to reach the town, which was built on the slope of the range, we had to pass through a wide valley, the bottom of which was occupied by some meagre, ill-cultivated fields.

In the evening we made our camp about the middle of the valley, on a grass plot intersected by the bed of a brook, and near three native villages lying at the foot of a hill. About 300 yards to the east were the heights surrounding Sechele's villa, which was built several hundred feet above the level of the brook, and at the end of a shallow pass wind-

ing up the hills to the north. In close proximity to the villa, which was sheltered by a small rocky eminence, were the offices belonging to the royal household, the kotla, or enclosed conference-hall of the Bakuenas, and the residences of some traders, who were making a temporary stay in the place. Down below, on the edge of the valley, was a native village, also a portion of Molopolole; whilst a third part lay at the foot of the isolated southern ridge that was separated from the extensive northern and eastern chain by a long narrow pass called Kobuque by the natives. At the base of the northern hills, near a part that is fallen into ruins, there was yet another quarter of the town; this was not in the valley, but just outside, adjoining the fields that extended to the south-south-west. A second pass, the rocky entrance of which was called Molopolole, and gave its name to the town, ran from the valley in a northerly direction, and formed the course of the brook that descended from the Bakuena heights. Just where this pass joined the valley stood the mission buildings and the school, the chapel being situated in the upper portion of the town.

CHAPTER X.

FROM MOLOPOLOLE TO SHOSHONG.

Picturesque situation of Molopolole—Sechele's territory—Bakwena architecture—Excursion up the glen—The missionaries—Kotlas—My reception by Sechele—A young prince—Environs of Molopolole—Manners and customs of the Bechuanas—Religious ceremonies—Linyakas—Medical practice—Amulets—Moloi—The exorcising of Khome—Rain-doctors—Departure from Molopolole—A painful march—Want of water—The Barwas and Masarwas—Their superstition and mode of hunting—New Year's Day in the wilderness—Lost in the woods—Saved by a Masarwa—Wild honey—The Bamangwato highlands—Arrival at Shoshong.



WHITE-ANT HILLS.

VIEWED from the grassy valley in which we were

standing, Molopolole appeared undeniably the most picturesque of all the Bechuana towns. Around us were the rocky heights, most of them absolutely perpendicular in their upper parts, the lower half being formed of huge masses of rock, thickly wooded on the less abrupt declivities, and occasionally adorned with some giant aloe; on our right, overhanging the pass, was the Molopolole rock, with its interesting geological formation, and between us and the mouth of the defile were fine trees shading the mission buildings and their little gardens with their tropical growth of bananas and sugar-canes; in front of us, at the base of a steep cliff on the east, was one native village, and at the foot of a wooded eminence to the west lay another, in which was the spacious store of Messrs. Taylor, which, next to that of Francis and Grant, is the most important in the whole Bechuana country; between the villages the eye rested upon the rocky pass known as the Kobuque, and high above the more easterly of the two stood the portion of the town occupied by the royal residence, and the abodes of the upper class of the tribe. Turning to the north and west, we could see the part of the town that lay at the foot of the northern ridge, whilst outside the valley were the red ruins of a deserted village, and beyond that again the open plain, bounded on the south and south-west by the dark verdure of the woods that we had just traversed. Nothing was more striking in the entire scene than some enormous ant-hills standing at the edge of the

brook at the foot of the hills on the north; the principal pyramid was as much as nine feet and a half in height, and, including some smaller ones at the side, occupied an area forty feet in circumference.

But greatly as the scenery of Molopolole is to be admired, a like measure of approval cannot be bestowed either on the agricultural industry of its population, or on their style of architecture; nevertheless, their ruler deserves some credit for his prudent choice of this natural stronghold for his residence.

Sechele, the present king, to whom Livingstone has devoted more than one chapter of his "Travels," and of whom I have some few further particulars to relate, formerly resided with his Bakuenas to the south-east of Molopolole, near the spot where we now find the town of the Manupi. His tribe had become considerably reduced in numbers, through its wars and skirmishes with the surrounding people. Nothing but ruins now marks the site of his former home, which was near the Transvaal frontier, and called Kolobeng. Here it was that, in 1842, he was visited by the Nestor of African travellers.

Driven from Kolobeng by the Boers, Sechele next settled in Liteyana; but, in 1865, he migrated about ten miles eastward to Molopolole, where already there was a settlement established, and where he was joined by Pilani from Masupa. His territory, which is the most northerly of the four Bechuana kingdoms that I have mentioned, is bounded on the west

by the great Namaqualand; on the north by the eastern and western Bamangwato; on the east by the Limpopo and Marico on the Transvaal frontier; and on the south by the country of the Banquaketse. The southern frontier lies under lat. $24^{\circ} 10'$ S., and runs down past Kolobeng, in a south-east direction, as far as the Dwars Mountains and the Great Marico; the northern frontier, on the side of the two Bamangwato kingdoms, is in lat. $23^{\circ} 30'$ S., and partly follows the course of the Sirorume River. I should estimate the number of Sechele's actual subjects to be about 35,000, whilst the Batlokas, Bakhatlas, and Makhosi that reside in the country, but are not tributary to him, amount to 18,000 or 20,000 more. The entire population of Banquaketseland is nearly 30,000; the subjects of Montsua, the Barolong king, muster 35,000; whilst the smaller Barolong tribes that reside further in the neighbourhood of such towns as Marokana, and do not pay tribute to Montsua, may be estimated at 30,000 more. Man-kuruane, the Batlapin king, has more than 30,000 people under his dominion; and in the little Mamusa kingdom there are now scarcely 5000 inhabitants, although a few years ago there were at least 10,000 in the neighbourhood of Mamusa Town alone.

On the evening of the 21st, our encampment in the Molopolole valley was visited by an ill-clad Dutchman, who worked here as a smith, and by two natives, who directed us where to find pasturage for our oxen. They were soon followed by Mr. Price and Mr. Williams, the two missionaries, who came

to bid us welcome to the place. Mr. Williams has since returned to Europe, and Mr. Price has been ordered by his society to Central Africa. By his second marriage with Miss Moffat, this gentleman became related to Dr. Livingstone.

I took two excursions next morning—one to the ruined town on the west, and another up the glen that opened into the valley, by the Molopolole Pass. Amongst the ruins I noticed some vaulted buildings, constructed of reeds, twigs, and cement, similar to those which I had seen in Mosilili's Town on the Mosupa River. Turkish figs, and the well-known South African datura, with its violet-coloured blossoms, grew luxuriantly about the place.

The huts occupied by the Bakuenas, or Bakwenas, differed somewhat from those of the Batlapins and Barolongs. They were generally less substantially built, and in this respect were especially inferior to the Barolong huts; most of them, however, had the clay enclosures which are formed by the eastern Batlapins round their fire-places, but which are dispensed with by those of the south and west. In the villages, I found small meeting-rooms, or conference-halls, standing amongst the homesteads; they consisted of a conical straw roof, supported on twenty piles or more, the intervals between the piles being filled up half-way by a substantial wall of rushes, ornamented with simple devices in ochre.

My little expedition up the Molopolole glen well repaid me for the trouble. I shot several fish, and by the help of my rod caught no less than seven

sheat-fish. Under the overhanging, almost perpendicular cliff, that formed the left-hand side of the pass, was a deep place that by means of dams, partly natural and partly artificial, was kept perpetually full of water, which got dried up within the town. In arid seasons, this was an excellent refuge for the fish, better even than the smaller pools higher up the glen, which, being exposed to the ravages of otters and lizards, did not allow the fish to be propagated as rapidly as they otherwise would have been.

Accepting an invitation from the missionaries, I paid them a visit, and found that Mr. Price had a home that was furnished with much comfort and considerable taste. It must, however, have been a great difficulty for him to attain such an amount of domestic civilization. He had been one of the two missionaries appointed to conduct the mission into the country of the Makololos; their reverses, however, had been so many, and their non-success so complete, that they had been obliged to abandon their undertaking. His associate, Mr. Williams, belonged, like himself and the other missionaries in Kuruman, Taung, Kanya, and Shoshong, to the London Missionary Society; he had been several years in South Africa, and was now building himself a house. They offered to introduce me to the king. Accordingly, on the second day after my arrival, we proceeded to mount the rocky heights on which, like an eagle's nest, stands the part of the town that is occupied by Sechele and his retinue. Passing the unfinished house of Mr. Williams, we had first to

ascend a narrow section of the glen, at the end of which stood the chapel built by Mr. Price, an unpretending edifice, sixty feet long and twenty-one feet wide, with an aisle and a thatched roof. Thence we passed on through the south-east quarter of the



KING SECHELE.

upper portion of the town, and, before proceeding to the royal residence, had to direct our steps to the kotla, to pay our respects to the king, who had received formal notice of my arrival. By the "kotla," I mean one of the enclosures that I have described as erected in Bechuana villages and towns

for the purposes of conference and debate. On the side of the enclosure facing the royal residence was an opening, capable of being closed at pleasure by trunks of trees. Sitting on a bench near this spot, the king, surrounded by his relatives, subordinates, and the elders of his tribe, listens to the reports of his hunters, spies, and messengers, receives the visits of ambassadors from other kings, who are allowed to squat before him on the ground; and delivers all his judgments, sometimes by his own word, and sometimes by the mouth of one of his representatives. Not unfrequently there is a small wooden hut close at hand within the enclosure, where a fire is kept burning, providing a place of assembly in wet weather. The kotlas are sometimes obliged to serve as forts; and such as are situated at the foot of hills are protected on the side of attack by logs of extra size and weight as a defence against missiles.

Sechele received us standing. He was a man considerably over fifty years of age, stout, very tall, and with such a perpetual smile playing on his face as to give me at once the impression that I was in the presence of an utter hypocrite. This *primâ facie* impression was subsequently confirmed.

After acknowledging our salutations, Sechele turned to Mr. Price, and begged him to tell me that my appearance pleased him more than that of any white man he had ever seen. Mr. Price had hardly finished interpreting what had been said, when, in turning towards the king in astonishment at receiving so flattering a compliment from a man

whom I had never met before, I caught him winking his right eye at a subordinate chief and his son with an expression that completely belied his words. The facility with which, on perceiving my surprise, he resumed his habitual smirk, proved that he had no inconsiderable amount of self-possession.

He then invited me and the two missionaries to accompany him to his house, and to take a cup of tea. It was only a few minutes' walk to the front of his residence, a new and trim-looking edifice. Close beside it was the old house, now occupied by the king's eldest son, and adjoining it were the dwellings of the various other members of the royal family. The new abode had just been erected by the firm of Messrs. Taylor at a cost of 3000*l.*, the money being raised by the sale of ostrich feathers and oxen.

Sechele's establishment is more luxurious than that of any other of the Bechuana sovereigns, and he has quite adopted the European style of living.

Before describing our reception I may say a few words about Sechele himself.

Although he was the first of the six Bechuana kings to profess himself a Christian, he has the reputation of standing lower in moral character than any of them, whilst his northerly neighbour, Khame, the present king of the Eastern Bamangwatos is ranked highest, our good friend Montsua being assigned the second place. Sechele is a thorough intriguer, double-faced, and evidently a firm believer in the maxim that "the end justifies the means."

The name of his tribe, the Bakuenas, is derived from two words, Ba or Ma, and Kuena, or Kwena, signifying "crocodile-men," i. e. the men who dance the crocodile-dance, implying that although they do not actually worship it, they regard the crocodile with a certain amount of veneration. The king's full title is Sechele M'Kwase Morena ea Bakuena.

Quite unprepared for our visit, the queen was reclining in the courtyard, Bakuena fashion, on an oxhide; but as we entered she rose to greet us, and conducted us to the house. She was a tall, muscular woman, wearing a handkerchief bound round her head and fastened behind. She had on a cotton gown, and a great woollen shawl. Her designation is Ma-Sebele, the mother of Sebele, which was the name of her youngest son.

Whilst the queen went to order us some refreshments, Sechele handed us into the reception-room, or, as he called it in broken English, the drawing-room. It was furnished throughout in European style, the chairs and couches being of walnut-wood, covered with red velvet. Nothing pleased the king better than to exhibit the interior of his palace to a white man, and the complacent grin that overspread his countenance, as he ushered me through the apartments, evidently showed that he considered that he was giving me a great treat. After requesting me to be seated, he spread out his pocket-handkerchief, which he did not appear to use for any other purpose, on the chair which he selected for himself, and sat upon it. The queen, when

she returned, seated herself upon a wooden stool.

Sechele now proceeded to question me, through the missionaries as interpreters, as to my own nationality, and the object of my journey. It was the case with him, as with most Bechuanas, that the only white men that he knew were Englishmen, whom he liked, and Boers, whom he did not like; and he was manifestly surprised when he learned that I belonged to neither of them. As soon as he thought he had got the word "Austria" impressed upon his memory, he inquired upon what river I resided, and whether I lived in a town or at a cattle-station, by which he meant in the country. The name of Prague was another puzzle for him, and his surprise was still further increased when he heard that it was twenty times as large as Molopolole; his manner of expressing himself being that "his heart was full of wonder at the greatness of the village."

Turning to his wife, he said,—

"He is a nyaka (a doctor); he is not an Englishman; he is not a Boer; but—"

His memory had failed him, and he had to turn to the missionaries to be prompted.

He caught the word Austrian, and, rising from his seat, stammered out,—

"O-o-stri-en!"

Then, looking round, he smiled as if he had accomplished a prodigious feat.

At this moment a new comer appeared on the

scene. A tall boy came in, about fourteen years of age, dressed in a shirt, trousers, waistcoat, and a red woollen cap. He shook hands with the missionaries, as old acquaintances, and laughed at everything that was said, especially when the queen introduced him to me as her "Tholing Beb (darling baby) Sebele." When he had been with us about half-an-hour he suddenly recollected that he had come to say that tea was ready in the dining-room.

Sechele immediately led the way; we followed him, the queen bringing up the rear. We were all in great good-humour, particularly Tholing Beb and myself, both of us looking forward to partaking (he for the second time that day) of the cakes of the Makoa (white man), which I had not tasted for the last two months. The young prince, however, was not allowed to join us at the round table, but was made to stand aloof, and do all the waiting, an office which he performed very fairly.

The dining-room table was handsome, and covered with a white cloth. Tea was served in cups shaped like little bowls. The king swallowed at least a quart. The sugar-basin, cream-jug, and the rest of the service were placed upon a side-table; they were all of silver, being, as I understood, a present from the merchants who made periodical visits to Molopolole. The tea was good, and the cakes unexceptionable.

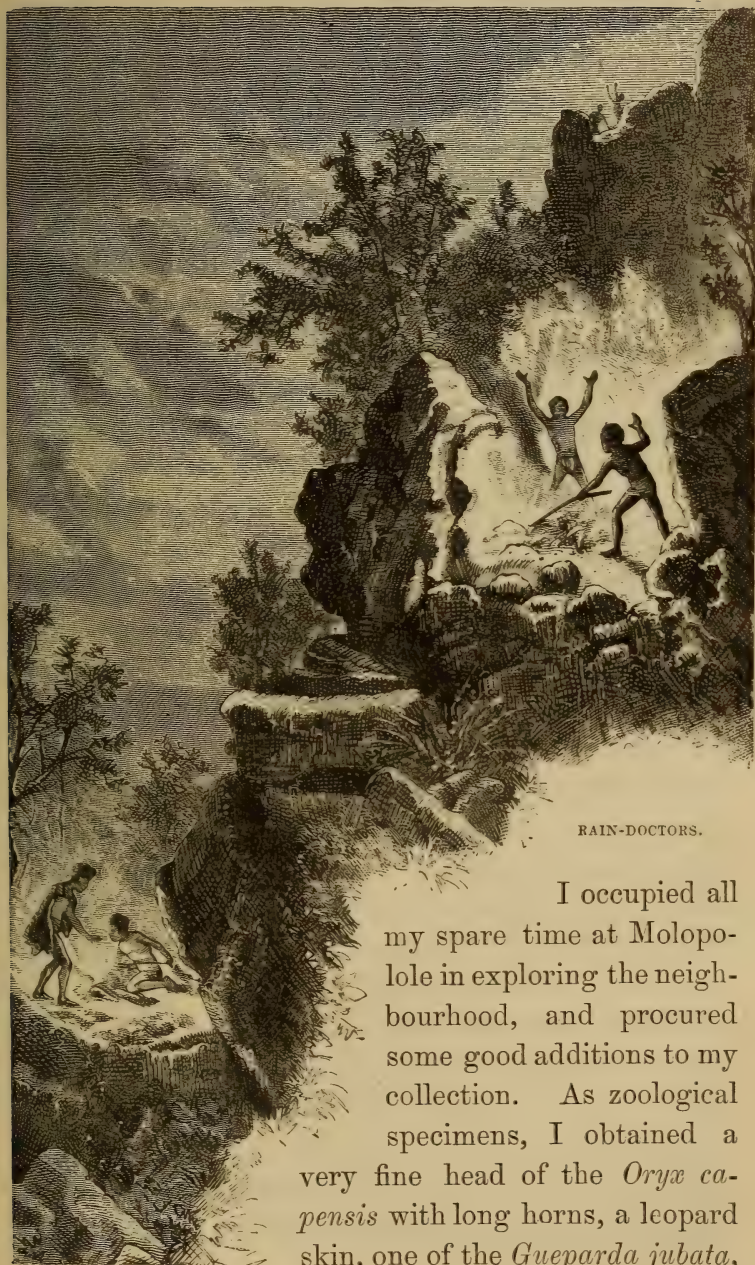
There was now a renewal of the conversation that had commenced in the drawing-room, and I was catechised about the proceedings of the English

Government in the diamond-fields, and those of the Dutch Government in Pretoria and Bloemfontein. The queen clearly had no interest in these subjects, and gradually resumed the nap which had been interrupted by our arrival. Sechele appeared a little vexed at her breach of etiquette, and attempted to rouse her by some spasmodic coughs, which became more violent at each repetition. Failing, however, to awaken her from her slumber, which every moment grew more sonorous, he stealthily gave her such pushes with his elephantine foot that I had the hardest matter to keep from bursting out laughing.

Controlling myself as well as I could, I said, "Morena, when I was only thirteen years old, I read your name in Nyaka Livingstone's book. I little thought that I should ever see you and speak to you: far more surprising is it to me to find myself drinking tea in your palace."

The king, although he still practised rain-magic, had become familiar with some passages of Scripture, and said, with a sanctimonious air, "His ways are past finding out."

But while Mr. Williams had been interpreting what I said to him, he had kept one eye fixed on his wife; and, observing to his disgust that she was almost falling from her seat in her drowsiness, he only waited until he thought I was not watching him, to give her such a tremendous poke, that she had a narrow escape of knocking her cup off the table with her forehead.



RAIN-DOCTORS.

I occupied all my spare time at Molopolole in exploring the neighbourhood, and procured some good additions to my collection. As zoological specimens, I obtained a very fine head of the *Oryx capensis* with long horns, a leopard skin, one of the *Gueparda jubata*,

and several of the Hyrax. I also procured a skin of the *Viverra Zivetta*, which seems to be very rare, besides some of the *Felis caligata*. Mr. Williams brought me the carcass of a three-year-old caama-fox, that had on some previous occasion been caught in a trap and lost one of its hind paws; it had now been caught a second time, and more effectually. The Bakuena heights are the habitat of the beautiful klipp-springer; and in the country north of Molopolole, we for the first time came across elands and giraffes.

I was very much struck by the number of medium-sized birds of prey, such as sparrow-hawks, falcons, buzzards, and kites. Mr. Williams had killed as many of the kites as he could, on account of the depredations they made amongst his wife's poultry. A great variety of owls, white owls, barn-owls, and small screech-owls likewise had their abode in the cliffs, and in the crevices of the rocks there were many sorts of mammalia and reptiles, snakes and lizards finding there a most congenial home. Insects, such as lepidoptera and flies, abounded in the luxuriant vegetation, and in the decaying trunks of trees. I also made a large gathering of beetles, spiders, and centipedes. I may say, without the least hesitation, that a student in almost any branch of natural history could hardly fail to make a visit to the Bakuena hills highly remunerative.

Here, just as on the Bamangwato heights, and other rocky ridges of the high plateau of Central

South Africa in connexion with the Marico or Matabele mountain systems, we find either the steep, fissured slopes of table-hills, or table-lands studded with conical and isolated peaks. The ascent to this network of hills is effected by a wooded and sandy plain with a scarcely perceptible rise, and the descent is just as gradual to a shallow river-bed, beyond which rises again another similar ridge of heights. The geological composition of these highlands consists of granite, quartz-slate, trapdykes, veins of chalk, and ferruginous sandy clay. The vegetation is characterized by some gigantic aloes, which in places form regular groves.

In concluding my account of Molopolole, I may be allowed to introduce a brief notice of some of the religious and social customs of the Bechuanas generally. I obtained many details from the English missionaries, Messrs. Mackenzie, Hephrun, Price, Williams, Brown, and Webb; from the German missionary, Herr Jensen; and from several of the better educated Bechuanas themselves; and in the course of my three journeys into the interior, I was able to verify many particulars by my own observation.

In the strict sense of the word the Bechuanas, that is to say, the branches of that family in Central South Africa, cannot be said to have any religion at all; nevertheless the circumstance, that upon receiving their first instruction in Christianity, they at once applied to the Unseen God the designation of "Morimo," without attaching any difference to

the signification of the word, would lead to the inference that in bygone times they had rendered homage to some presumed divinity either visible or invisible. Another word, closely allied to *Morimo*, and not unfrequently heard in the vocabulary of the *Bechuanas*, is “*Barimo*,” by which they appear to signify the spirits of the departed. But although they cannot be said to have any actual religion, the mass of the population put a kind of faith in certain ceremonies, which amongst other people professing polytheism would be regarded as religious rites; they likewise avow a degree of veneration for certain animals, inasmuch as they will not kill them, eat them, nor use their skins. We find also that ceremonies such as these to which I refer are performed and inculcated by persons educated and set apart for the purpose, with the king, or if the king should be a Christian, with the heathen next in rank to him, at their head; thus forming a sort of society of priests, having a high priest, called *nyaka* or *nyaga*.

As long as the *Bechuanas*, though subdivided into several families, were united under a single sceptre, the right of kingship was hereditary in the *Baharutse* tribe; and subsequently the old royal family retained the prerogative of performing what might be called the sacerdotal part in the ceremonials. For a long while after the empire was broken up, and the various tribes had branched off—one to the north, others to the south, east, south-east, and south-west, forming larger or smaller independent

states of their own—the ancient royal family was not only respected, but notwithstanding that their sovereign control was limited to the small clan from which they originally sprang, they still held the rank of high priests at all the great superstitious rites, so that even members of other reigning families, as well as the nyakas, would journey from the new states back to the court of the Baharutse to see the ceremonials duly performed by their former chief. Of late years, however, since the branch tribes have developed into important states, and many of their chiefs have become Christians, the custom has almost ceased; nevertheless the ancient royal family is always held in high veneration by the whole of the Bechuanas; and this, in spite of its members through mutual dissension having lost every vestige of power, and residing either as subjects of the Transvaal in and about the town of Linokana, or as subjects of Khatsisive in the town of Moshaneng. The present chief of the eastern Baharutse, and consequently the proper sovereign of the Bechuanas is a young man named Pilani.

In the detached Bechuana kingdoms the sovereign institutes and arranges the ceremonies; in districts where several tribes are united under one rule, this responsibility devolves upon the leading chief. The most important of the ceremonies is the formal partaking of the first-fruits, mainly of the gourd; but, in addition to this, there are the initiation into the healing art, the invocation of rain, and the magical

incantations. The partaking of the first-fruits must be performed by the chief alone, in his capacity of head doctor and magician; but in the other rites he is assisted by the linyakas or priests, who also practise the arts of rain-making and magic, and who are generally nyakas, having, in addition to their other attainments, a certain superficial acquaintance with the medicinal properties of plants.

Out of doors these linyakas are distinguished by a short mantle made from the skin of the baboon (*Cynocephalus Babuin*), and their homes are characterized by carpets made from the skins of the *Hycena crocata* or *maculata*, on which they sit to receive audiences. Many of them wear round their necks whole strings of the bones of different mammals, birds, and reptiles, and all, without exception, are provided with four little pegs, generally made of ivory, but sometimes of horn, and branded over with figures, which are thrown like dice, and used for the ostensible purpose of diagnosis; these pegs are called "dolos," and are occasionally carried by men who, though not actually linyakas, have paid a sum of money to be instructed in their use.

The office of linyaka is hereditary, but young aspirants may obtain admission into the order. Before entering upon the requisite course of study, every candidate must present his teacher with a cow, or some gift of equal value, or if he should happen to have gained some mali (money) in the diamond-fields, he has to hand over a fee, which may vary from 4*l.* to 7*l.* The first step in the course

is to dig up¹ the plants that are reputed to have medicinal virtues, and for this purpose the student is taken through the woods and plains, and made familiar not only with the plants themselves, but with the parts of them that are to be employed, and with the times and seasons when they ought to be gathered. The appropriate parts of the plants having been steeped in water to form decoctions, or dried and pounded into powders, are then, by the use of certain formularies, converted into "medicines;" other formularies being repeated when the remedies are administered, an operation which must of necessity be performed by the doctor himself, and which ordinarily takes place in the presence of a noisy crowd of lookers-on.

In disorders like typhus or dysentery, sudorifics are the remedy most frequently exhibited. The patient is made to lie down in his best fur jacket, or in a warm woollen shawl bought probably for the occasion, and when the medicines have done their work, the nyaka reappears and carries off the reeking garment, in order, as he says, to bury it, sweat and all. The patient may be rejoiced at having the disorder carried so effectually out of the house, but if, when convalescent, he should happen to see the doctor's wife parading the village in his jackal-skin, or in the comfortable shawl, he would never venture to hint at its restoration.

The latter portion of the course of study com-

¹ Digging forms a conspicuous element in all the Bechuana ceremonies.

prises the art of casting the dolos. Besides being doctors, the linyakas are conjurers and magicians, and accordingly have to teach their pupils how to procure, use, and sell the amulets, which, bound round the forehead, or worn on the neck, are supposed to secure protection from the malevolence of enemies, from the attacks of disease, from the pursuit of wild beasts, or from any injuries by gunshot. Such amulets are manufactured out of the tarsus bones of certain small quadrupeds, the scales of pangolins, the metatarsus bones and claws of several birds, the skins of snakes and lizards, small tortoise-shells, or the bodies of large weevils. None, however, of these are considered of more importance than the dolos, with their variegated devices, strung together either singly or mixed with beads on blades of grass, or hairs from the tail of the giraffe. The principal use that is made of them is for purposes of divination; they are brought into play to find out the whereabouts of stolen goods, or the retreat of a fugitive, as well as to exorcise obnoxious men and beasts; they are considered capable of charming away an enemy, and of averting mischief, certain formulæ generally being recited whenever they are employed.

Another department of the linyakas' functions is to perform certain public ceremonies for the common welfare, such as burying a couple of antelopes' horns on the paths leading to a town; placing pots on stakes in a prominent part of a village; hanging baboon-skulls near the entrance of a kotla; or set-

ting the heads of some large beasts of prey at the gate of a cattle-kraal, the design in each case being to provide a charm against external attack. Occasionally, also, fields are furnished with magic charms to ensure a fruitful harvest, or to keep off locusts; the amulets which are employed for these public purposes being always prepared with mysterious rites, and only the most venerable of the linyakas being permitted to officiate. Amongst the Marutse, on the Central Zambesi, human sacrifices have been made on these occasions.

The public amulets are called "lipeku," and there are some occasions in which the laity are allowed to take part in their preparation. Such is the case with the "khomo kho lipeku," i. e. the dedication of the ox to the lipeku. For this ceremony a bullock is selected that has never been in harness; its eyelids are tightly sewn together with fine sinews; it is then turned in again with the rest of the herd, and having been watched for a while, is slaughtered; its blood is then boiled up with other charms, and the mixture preserved in small gourd-vessels. In times of war the king and his generals either smear themselves with the compound, or hang little pots of it on various parts of their bodies.

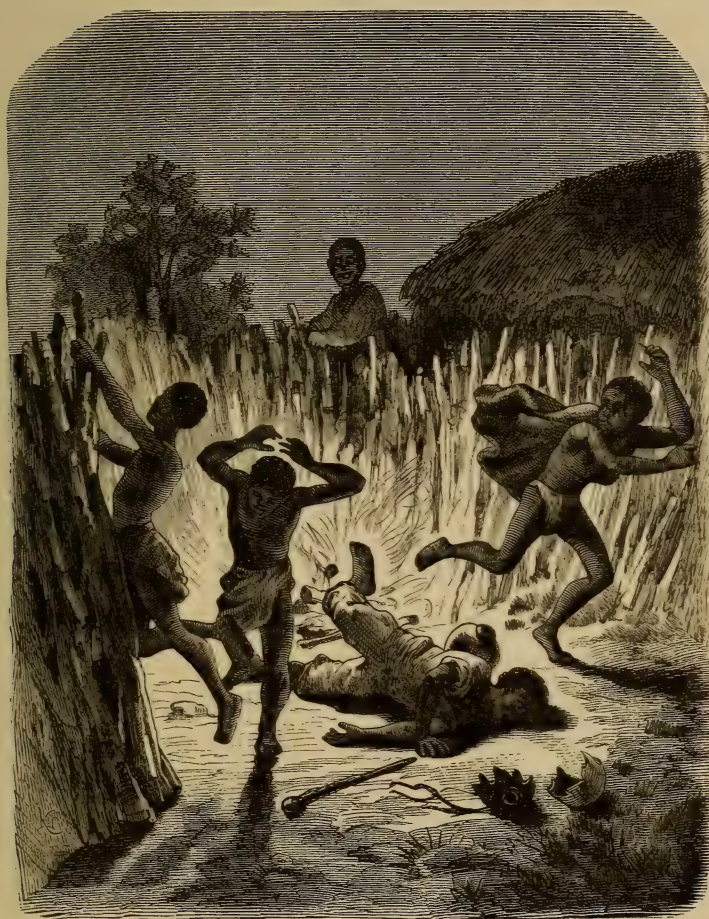
But although the linyakas in general secure the veneration of the people, there is a class of them that is feared and hated. Such of them as have been known to act from revenge, or who have voluntarily done any injury, or whose magic has proved

unavailing, are called "mloi," or evil magicians, an epithet held so detestable that a Bechuana cannot be more insulted than by having it applied to himself. A mloi is considered more potent than a linyaka; it is believed that he can control nature without the aid of any formal enchantment; that he can clamber over rocks, and cross rivers without being heard; that fire does not harm him; and that jackals cease howling at his approach. Mothers often quiet their crying children by threatening them with the mloi.

These evil magicians are credited with the desire of injuring the crops. Sometimes a true linyaka of good repute may be employed by a chief to inflict this injury on an enemy, but in that case the odium would fall upon the chief, without at all affecting the position of the linyaka.

The Bechuanas maintain that the mloi dig up corpses and kill new-born infants, in order to apply certain portions of the bodies to their incantations; but their most formidable charms are believed to be prepared from large serpents and crocodiles, and from other animals that are most difficult to capture. If any one has a grudge against his neighbour he will betake himself to a mloi, under cover of darkness, and pay him a fee for his services; whatever death the intended victim may subsequently die is confidently attributed to the operation of the magician; if he should die a natural death, he has been poisoned by the subtle "molemo," or if he falls on a hunting excursion, he has assuredly been attacked by some beast that the mloi had enchanted.

The accompanying illustration depicts a scene that occurred in Shoshong, in 1866. King Sekhomo was so jealous of the exceeding popularity of his son



KHAME'S MAGIC.

Khame, that he determined to kill him. For this purpose he secretly engaged some moli to go by night and enact their deadliest enchantments in

front of Khame's house. Awakened by the gleam of a fire just beyond his enclosure, Khame crept out and stood quietly surveying the preparations. One of the performers of the mysteries happening to look round, and catching the sight of Khame's face in the glare, gave a loud cry of surprise; this so startled his companions that they took to their heels. The young man came forward, smashed up all the magic apparatus, threw it as so much lumber on the fire, which he stopped carefully to extinguish, and the next morning, to the chagrin of the king and the discomfiture of the moloji, made his appearance in the kotla as well and hearty as ever.

In conformity with the rest of their character, the moloji have a singular antipathy to rain; they claim the ability to ward it off by burning a fresh green bough, with a suitable incantation, and maintain that they can frighten away the clouds by the mystic use of their guns. In every possible way they lay themselves out to thwart the proceedings of the recognized rain-doctors.

Perhaps the avocation of the linyakas and their chief representative which is really the most important, is the invocation of rain. In protracted periods of drought, when there seems a probability of the accustomed public incantations turning out a failure, recourse is had to linyakas who reside in more rainy districts, the Malokwanas, from the right bank of the central Limpopo, being always ready to put in an appearance in consideration of an adequate present of cattle.

But in ordinary seasons the task is entrusted to the native linyakas, who in the early spring, either alone or accompanied by a few volunteers, betake themselves to a fertile plot of ground selected as appropriate for the purpose, and proceed "tsimo ea pula," i.e. to dig the rain-field. In the four corners of the field the men plant a number of seeds of maize, gourds, or water-melons, over which the linyakas have repeated their incantations, and then the women commence the work of digging the soil. The day of the ceremonial is the occasion of a general holiday, the women not going on with their labour till the following morning.

From that day forward the people are forbidden to gather the young branches of trees, especially those of the warten-bichi, which is regarded with veneration by the Bechuanas. But as soon as the kaffir-corn is ripe, the men, with the linyaka at their head, and provided with hatchets and knives, assemble at the kotla, and proceed to cut some branches from the sacred acacia; with these they first repair the royal cattle-kraal adjoining the kotla, and then make good any defects in their other enclosures. To carry a bough of the *Acacia detinens* round a village at midday before harvest would be regarded as a great calamity to the tribe.

During harvest-time all fruits, ostrich-feathers, and ivory must be brought into the town from the woods covered up. If it has rained in the night, and continues to rain in the morning, no one works

in the fields that day for fear of disturbing the rain, and inducing it to stop. When the wet weather has fairly set in, or as the Bechuanas conceive, when the doctors have brought on the rain, the linyakas have to continue their operation, so as to ensure that the downpour may be of long duration.

For this purpose they are accustomed to resort occasionally by themselves, but much more frequently in company with their pupils and the owners of the land, to some isolated spot away among the hills, where they whistle, shout, mumble their formulæ, and light fires on the ledges of the rocks, into which from time to time they throw handfuls of their magic compounds.

When at any time the efforts of the linyakas seem unavailing, the fault is supposed not to lie with them, but with certain of the community who must have committed some undetected breach of the laws. Suspicion more often than not falls upon widows or widowers, who are presumed to have omitted some of the purifications prescribed for their condition; they are accordingly sentenced to undergo a public purifying, and the linyakas are paid to erect grass-huts outside the town, where the accused are obliged to reside for an indefinite time, their hair being all shorn from their heads, and whence they are not permitted to depart to their homes until they are pronounced thoroughly cleansed.

If this purification of individuals should prove

unavailing, a general purifying of all fires and fire-places is ordered, and the linyakas proceed to remove from every hearth the three stones upon which the kettle is supported, and having carried them all away, and laid them in a heap outside the town, they consecrate as many new ones. During this ceremony all fires must be put out; and either in the evening of the same day, or early on the following morning, one of the assistant officers brings some brushwood and a light, and kindles the fires afresh.

If it should turn out that even this proceeding is a failure, more vigorous measures still have to be adopted. An universal cleansing of the entire town is proclaimed, and all accumulations of the bones of animals, all fragments of skins, and all remnants of human remains, are scrupulously collected and buried in a deep grave; and if the grave should be anywhere near the burial-place of a former chief, which is generally kept a secret, a cow is slaughtered to appease his anger, which probably has been aroused; and very often hunting excursions, known as "letshulo," are set on foot for the purpose of securing particular animals, some parts of which are essential for the linyakas' enchantments and rain-charms.

Whatever effect Christianity may have had in ameliorating the condition of the wives of the converts, it has done very little to lighten the severity of their tasks; the introduction of the plough, however, which is driven by men with the

help of oxen (animals which the women never touch), has relieved the Bechuana women of one of their most fatiguing labours. It is to be hoped that it will gradually tend to the abolition of all the senseless ceremonies of the rain-magic, which I have made this long digression to describe.

I resume the account of our travels.

We left Molopolole by the Koboque-pass, and proceeded northwards along the valley of an affluent of the Tshanyana. The vegetation around us was luxuriant, the river-banks, valleys, and hill-sides being partially wooded with shrubs and trees, and clothed with flowers and grasses of many varieties. The steep cliffs, here red, there yellow, there again grey or dark brown, formed natural terraces of rock, whilst the great loose boulders, some sharp at the edges, some rounded, were set in a framework of verdure, spangled with blossoms of every hue.

The clouds were not propitious, and it was through a heavy downpour of rain that we had to toil along the sandy road. But this was neither the end nor the worst of our ill-luck. When we came to a halt after the exertions of the day, I found that Stephan and Dietrich, the two servants that I had brought from Musemanyana, had disappeared, and with them two of my strongest bullocks. I had noticed on the previous evening how the runaways had been repeatedly warning me that there were lions in the neighbourhood, and concluded that they had a desire to dissuade me from continuing my

journey. Our distance from Molopolole was about fifteen miles; nevertheless I determined to make my way back, and to ask Sechele to despatch some horsemen over Khatsisive's country in search of the rascals; and finding next morning that the rain had almost ceased, accompanied by Boly and Pit, I set out on foot to the town.

I walked for five hours, but my heavy boots had by that time rendered my feet so painful that I was obliged to stop; and sitting down on the grass at the edge of the pass leading into the Molopolole valley, I sent Boly and Pit to carry my messages to Sechele and Mr. Price.

Hour after hour went slowly by, foreboding no good for the success of their mission, and when they joined me again quite late in the afternoon, it was only to confirm my fear that all search had been unavailing.

It was little less than martyrdom that I endured all the way back to the waggon. Unable to bear the pressure of my boots, I was compelled to walk barefooted, and as the rain had washed down on to the road countless seeds of a kind of ranunculus (*R. crepens*), that the Boers on account of their prickliness have named "Devil's grit," my agonies can be better imagined than described.

Only just before midnight we caught sight of the blaze of our camp-fire, and were greeted with a cheer of welcome.

As the place had no pleasant associations for us, we started as soon as we could on the following

morning, pursuing our way through the sandy woods still to the north. The road led us across some shallow depressions that evidently indicated a slope of the land eastward, in the rainy season containing some of the affluent brooks of the Limpopo.



PIT, THE GRIQUA, DISCOVERS LEOPARD TRACKS.

On the 29th our travelling was exceedingly laborious, not simply on account of the sand, but from the rise of the ground in the direction we were going. The shortest distance by road between Molopolole and Shoshong is 128 miles; but in consequence of the deficiency of water, it is only at certain times of the year that the direct route is

available, and a long circuit generally has to be made. On foot the journey is shorter, and may be accomplished in five days.

Some traces of lions and leopards that we observed next day on the edge of the barren depressions warned us to proceed with caution, and the sand into which our wheels sank seven or eight inches did not allow our progress to be as rapid as we could desire.

The numerous skeletons of antelopes, elands, and giraffes were a token that at no long period previously the district must have abounded with game. On none of the giraffe-skulls that I examined between this place and Shoshong did I find the bony protuberances on the forehead to be of equal height, and many had one or both covered with exostoses, which in some cases formed a bridge between them across the brow.

Once more, on the 31st, we found ourselves in a sandy forest. During the last two days there had been no rain, and the South African sun poured down upon us its glowing beams. While we were toiling along, Boly drew my attention to some dark objects hanging on an acacia. On closer approach we found them to be large pieces of dry giraffe-hide, which we conjectured that some huntsmen had hung up and forgotten; but while we were handling them we were accosted by a Makalahari, who told us that they belonged to the morena Sechele, and thus put an end to any idea we might have entertained of appropriating them to ourselves. The man told

us that he and a few others were stationed there for giraffe-hunting, the flesh being their own perquisite, while the skins were the property of the king. I gave him a little present, and he told me that we should not meet with any water until the middle of the following day, a piece of information that made us push on with all possible speed, and we did not bring our day's march to an end before it was quite late.

The New Year's morning of 1874 dawned dull and drear. Although the previous day had been so hot the sky was now overcast, and the temperature considerably lower. Towards the middle of the day the atmosphere became clearer, and we saw a small column of smoke rising from a wooded eminence above the valley before us which seemed to extend towards the east. Had it been a column of gold we could hardly have been more delighted than we were at the sight of that dingy vapour, and we had no sooner discerned the miserable huts from which it arose than we sent Pit on ahead to implore the inhabitants to let us have some water to allay our thirst. Some children were playing in the vicinity, and we soon came upon two men in the valley who appeared to be awaiting our arrival. To our grievous disappointment, when we came up with Pit, he told us that he had ascertained that the only places from which the people obtained their drinking-water were a few deep pools, much too small for any animals but goats to drink from, and there was no place in the neighbourhood where

we could water our cattle that it was possible for us to reach before sunset ; and here were two of the people, who having obtained the permission of their master, a Bakuenta, offered to show us the nearest way.

One of these volunteer guides was a Masarwa. I think that I have already mentioned that the Bechuanas, like the Korannas of Mamusa, possess servants, or more properly slaves, belonging to the Makalahari race, sometimes termed the Bakalahari, who formerly owned the territory between the Zambesi and the Orange River. Although really slaves they are generally treated with much consideration ; but besides them, there are two other tribes, the Barwas and the Masarwas, that are reckoned as slaves, and are regarded by the Bechuanas with much more disdain ; although at times there are alliances between the Makalahari and the Bakuentas, no free Bechuana would ever dream of allowing a connexion between himself and either of these two subject races.

The Barwas and the Masarwas, although perhaps not really identical, are known by either name promiscuously amongst the northern Bechuanas and the Madenassanas, who live in the upper central parts of the two Bamangwato kingdoms. They may be described as a cross between some branches of the Makalahari and the Bushmen. Their form, complexion, language, and customs afford various indications of their double origin, and I do not think I can be mistaken in supposing them to

be a link between the Bushmen and the Bantu family.

The Makalahari are generally employed by their Bechuana masters as cowherds, and especially as domestic servants, but these Masarwas are perpetually engaged as hunters, a pursuit in which they are far greater adepts than their owners.



NATIVE POSTMEN.

Like the Bushmen they use bows and arrows, to which Bechuanas are little accustomed; they are very adroit also in capturing animals by means of poisoned assegais, and in driving them into pits; and they are remarkably skilful in making battus; in this respect being very like the Madenassanas, a tribe closely allied to them in appear-

ance and language. It must be mentioned, however, that it is especially necessary to be on one's guard against their craft, treachery, and thievish propensities.

In districts where game is abundant they reside in detached villages. Their huts look something like large haycocks, consisting of a framework of stakes driven into the earth, fastened together firmly at the top about five feet above the ground, and covered with a layer of twigs and dry grass; they are surrounded by no enclosure whatever, and a few smooth stones on which seeds are crushed or bones broken, some piles of ashes, some clusters of dry vegetable pods, and a few worn foot-tracks are the sole signs of their being used for human habitation. Though they are slaves, they are entrusted with guns and ammunition, but all the skins, ostrich feathers, ivory, and rhinoceros-horn that they procure, as well as certain wild fruits, such as those of the baobab and fan-palm, have to be handed over to their masters. If while hunting with his slaves a Bamangwato or Barolong master has to return home, he leaves the control with the eldest of them; but after being left they have to go back every three or four months and present themselves at the town to deliver what they have secured. On their arrival they are not allowed to enter during the daytime, but are compelled to wait outside, and to give in their names and an account of themselves to the inhabitant next in rank to the chief, who communicates what they report to him; mes-

sengers are then sent out to conduct them to the kotla. Hunters who omit to attend the royal residence in the proper way are sent for, and by stern reprimand are compelled to perform this duty.

The Masarwas are of medium height, reddish-brown complexion, and a repulsive cast of countenance. Although in form they resemble the Bushmen, in colour and feature they are more like the Makalahari; they are not, however, so faithful and confiding as these, and consequently are rarely engaged either as domestic servants or as soldiers. At the same time, they act very well as spies upon a frontier, and are useful in bringing intelligence of the advance of an enemy.

No people in South Africa are more skilful than the Masarwas in foraging out water in dry districts, or more keen in tracking game. The rough treatment that they have received from the Bechuanas, as punishment for their misdemeanours, makes them very shy of the white man; and in travelling across the Kalahari desert, or through such woods as we had just traversed, or through those between Shoshong and the Zooga, or, again, between the Salt Lakes and the Zambesi, a European may be followed unawares by people of this tribe, who keep their distance from mere fear of being maltreated or put to hard work; but let a good head of game be brought down, and before the carcass is cold he will find himself surrounded by a number of them, ready to receive his commission to disembowel it, and

quite content to receive a good piece of the flesh for their remuneration.

The Masarwas may be said to bear somewhat the same relation to the other South African tribes as the vulture does to the birds and the jackal to the beasts. Wherever his keen eye espies a vulture hovering in the air, he hastens towards the spot where it seems about to settle; there, if (as perchance he will) he catches sight of a lion in the middle of his savage meal, by dint of shouting, hurling stones, and firebrands, he will make the brute retreat, and climbing up like a monkey into a tree, or scrambling like a weasel into a bush, he will take deliberate aim, choosing a vulnerable spot into which he may send his poisoned arrow, and lay the monarch of the forest low.

Like the Bushmen in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, the Barwas and Masarwas have a great aversion to agriculture and cattle-breeding. In their primitive dwellings, they do not seem to practise stone-carving, or to use any stone utensils; and the only attempt that I ever saw at carving amongst them was in extremely simple patterns, something like those executed by the Makalahari. Out of ostrich-eggs, however, they cut circles and manufacture long chains and various other ornaments. I never saw or heard of any formation of caves or grottoes among them, nor of any attempt at adorning the rocks.

Superstition is very rife in the entire tribe. Before his hunting-excursions, whether he goes

alone or in attendance upon his master, the Masarwa never fails to rattle and throw his dolos, in order to ascertain the position and the number of the game he is going to catch, and he relies completely on the indications they give as to his success. The dolos



MASARWAS AROUND A FIRE.

are consulted also in cases of sickness, and even to find out the time at which his master is likely to arrive. He calls them his Morimos, the name having been picked up from the Bechuanas, who used it originally to specify the Deity, but who employ it now merely to signify some object higher than the

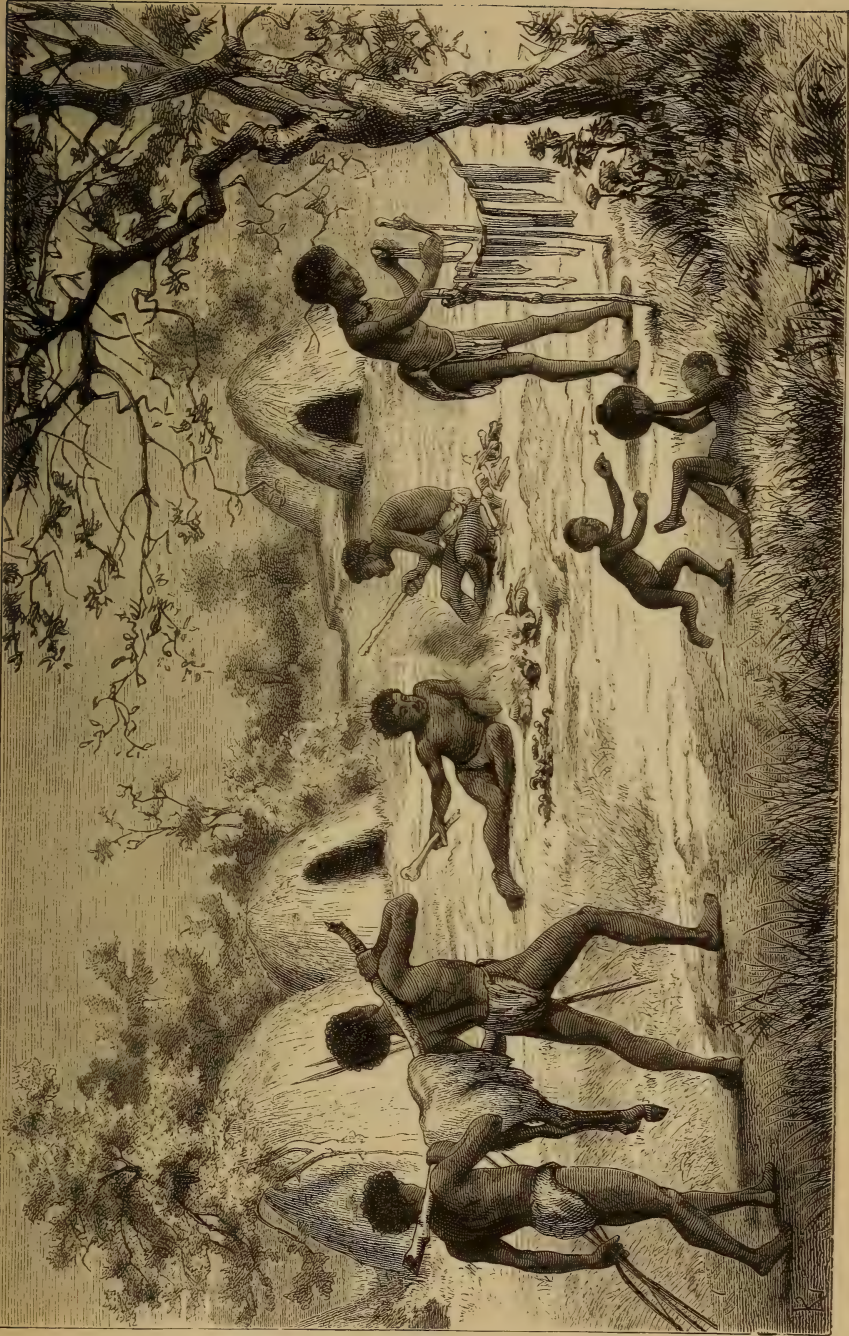
Morenas (princes). In speaking of his treasured possession, he will say, "Se se Morimo se" (This is my god); or, "Lilo tsa Morimo sa me" (These are the instruments of my god); or, "Lilo-lia impulelela mehuku" (These tell me all about him); and not only does he implicitly believe that some sort of supernatural power resides in his *dolos*, but that he himself in the use of them becomes a sort of inspired instrument.

The Masarwas appear to act with more consideration for their wives than the Bechuanas and the Makalahari; they impose upon them no harder duties than fetching water, and carrying the ordinary domestic utensils; the vessels in which the water is conveyed being generally made of ostrich-shells, or of gourds bound with bast or strips of leather. They also show great regard for their dogs, and treat them in a way that is in marked contrast with the ill-usage that the Bechuanas bestow upon them.

As no traveller has ever resided amongst them for a sufficient length of time to become master of their language, very little is known about their habits and customs. It has, however, been ascertained about them that, on reaching maturity, the cartilage between the nostrils is pierced, and a small piece of wood is inserted and allowed to remain till a permanent hole is formed. The operation is described by the Sechuana word "rupa," and amongst the Bechuanas is preliminary to the rite of circumcision.

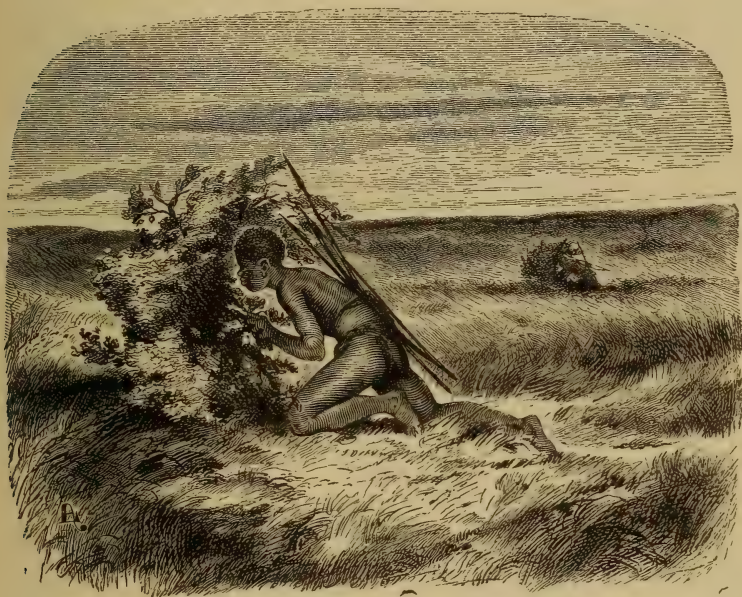
In many districts the Masarwas are above middle height, and sometimes, in the country of the Bamangwatos and Bakuenas, are, like the dominant race, quite tall. After the repulsiveness of their features, there is nothing about them that strikes a traveller so much as the red, half-raw scars that they continually have on their shin-bones, and not unfrequently on their arms, feet, and ankles. Wearing only a small piece of hide round his loins, and carrying nothing more than a little shield of eland-hide, the Masarwa suffers a good deal from cold; but instead of putting his fireplace within an enclosure, like the Bechuana, or inside his hut, like the Koranna, he lights his fire in the open air, and squats down so close to it in order to feel its glow, that as he sleeps with his head on his knees, he is always getting frightfully scorched, and his skin becomes burnt to the colour of an ostrich's legs.

The Colonial Bushman is known to cover himself with the skin of some wild animal, so as to get within bowshot of his prey; and in very much the same way the Masarwa uses a small bush, which he holds in his hands and drives before him, whilst he creeps up close to the game of which he is in pursuit. A friend of mine once told me how he was one evening sitting over his fire, smoking, on the plains of the Mababi Veldt, where the grass was quite young and scarcely a foot high, and dotted over with little bushes, when all at once his eye rested upon a bush about fifty yards in front of him, at a spot where he felt sure that there had not been one before. Having



MASARWAS AT HOME.

watched it for nearly a quarter of an hour, and finding that it did not move, he came to the conclusion that he had been mistaken, and rose to go to his waggon. His surprise was great when, turning round a few minutes afterwards, he saw a Masarwa, who had gradually approached him under cover of the bush that he carried.



MODE OF HUNTING AMONG THE MASARWAS.

By the time we reached the water-pools to which we were being conducted, I was considerably better. The place, at which it was my intention to halt for a day or two, was strewn with zebras' hoofs clustered over with little excrescences formed by wasps' larvæ, with fragments of koodoo and bless-

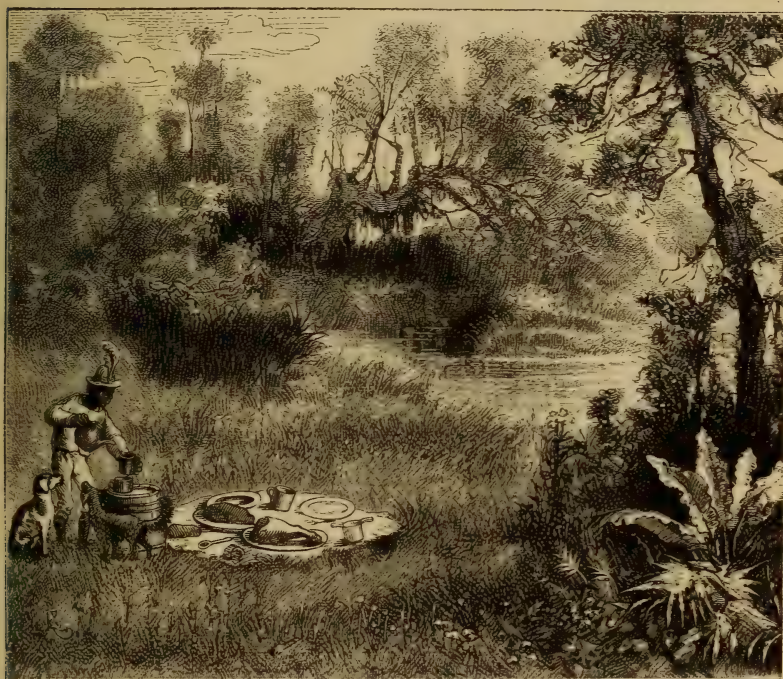
bocks' horns, with the skulls of striped gnus, of a giraffe, and of a rhinoceros, so that there could exist little doubt but that comparatively recently it had been the site of a hunter's quarters. This impression was confirmed by the Masarwa guide, who told us that a party of Bakuenas, with one of Sechele's sons at their head, had not long since carried back with them to Molopolole a great waggon-load of skins and meat, besides a number of ostriches.

Having refreshed ourselves, we agreed that we were bound duly to celebrate our New Year's Day. Our festivities were necessarily of a very simple character, and were brought to a close by drinking the health of the Emperor of Austria in the heart of the South African wilderness. The Masarwa stared at us in great amazement; to him our cheers appeared like speaking to the air, and he inquired of Pit whether we were addressing our morimo.

Towards evening I felt myself so far recovered, that I ventured to take a little stroll into the woods to a spot where the road branched off suddenly from west to north, and where I had observed some trees of a remarkable height. In the different woods between Molopolole and Shoshong, some groves of trees are sixty feet high, and amongst them I saw a species of *Acacia horrida*, that I think I had not seen elsewhere.

In various places some old trunks of trees had fallen down, and their black bark had become partly

embedded in broken boughs, or they had rested in their fall obliquely against the standing trunks of other trees, while the vegetation that sprouted luxuriantly from the mould that formed upon the decaying wood grew up so thick as to make tracts in the forest that were perfectly impenetrable. I



PREPARING THE NEW YEAR'S FEAST IN THE FOREST.

heard the cackle of some guinea-fowl at no great distance, but as it was growing dusk, I felt it was unadvisable to proceed farther into the grove.

Having amply remunerated them, I sent our two guides back again, but according to their

advice, I had six large fires lighted round our encampment to keep off the beasts of prey that we were assured were very numerous. Then all unconscious that the next day was to be one of the most eventful of my experience, I lay down and was soon asleep.

I did not wake next morning till after my usual hour, and was only aroused by a strange chilly sensation running over my body. It was caused by one of the small snakes that lurked in the skulls that lay around, and that had been attracted towards us by the warmth of our camp-fires.

The sun was already quite high, and I found that some visitors had arrived, amongst whom I recognized the Bakuena who was the principal resident in the village which we had passed through on the previous day. He had brought some pallah-skins, a few white ostrich-feathers of inferior quality, and an elephant's tusk weighing about nine pounds, that bore manifest signs of having been shed some years, and having lain in the grass long before it was discovered.

About noon I shouldered the double-barrelled gun that I had brought from Moshaneng, took a dozen cartridges, and went off to get some fresh game for our larder. I had not gone many hundred yards before I observed some vestiges of gnus, which I tracked for some distance, until I came across several fresh giraffe foot-marks running in quite a different direction; at once I altered my course and followed them. The herd, I reckoned, must have

been at least twenty in number. After keeping along them for nearly two miles, I found the tracks divided, but I adhered to the line of the more numerous, taking, as I imagined, a north-west direction.

The turf was close and by no means deep, so that it was at times rather difficult to distinguish the footprints; the broken branches, however, showed clearly enough that the animals had gone that way quite recently. In some places the under-wood was very dense, and there were a good many irregularities in the soil. All the time that my attention had been given to the breaking off of the branches, I had quite forgotten to take any account of the direction in which I had been advancing, and after three miles it occurred to me that I might have some difficulty in returning. Whilst I was pondering over my position, I became conscious of a sickening sensation, which I attributed to being tired and hungry, but almost immediately afterwards I felt a most violent pain in my temples, and my head appeared to be whirling round like a windmill. I wandered about for a while, quite realizing to myself that I could not be more than five miles from the waggon, but finally started off rapidly in what must have been precisely the opposite direction. Whether I was overcome by fatigue and pain, or whether I had experienced a slight sun-stroke, I cannot say, but to this day it is a mystery to me why, from the time I left the giraffe-track, till the lengthened shadows told of the approach of

evening, it never once occurred to me to look at the sun.

Having discovered my mistake, I turned my course immediately to the east, indulging the hope that I might reach the road between Molopolole and Shoshong. But I was now too much exhausted to go far without resting. I could hardly advance more than twenty yards without stopping to recover my energies, and moreover I was beginning to suffer from the agonies of thirst. It came into my mind that perhaps I was really nearer to the waggon than I imagined, or that possibly I might be within hearing of any Masarwas that happened to have hunting-quarters somewhere near; accordingly, to attract attention, I fired off eight shots in succession. Between each I paused for a time and listened anxiously. My shots were spent in vain.

At the cost of getting severely scratched, I next clambered up an acacia, and fired two more shots from the top. They were as unavailing as the rest; there was no response, no movement in the woods.

Sensible that my strength could not carry me much farther, I began to despair. I felt unwilling to make use of my last two shots, but why should I not? My gun itself was a greater burden than I could bear.

Without considering that by doing so I should probably only attract some beast of prey, I began to shout, but the state of my exhaustion prevented my

shouting long, and I sunk down upon an ant-hill, from the slippery side of which I soon rolled to the ground, my gun at my side. Here I suppose I was overpowered by the heat, as I recollect nothing except waking with a shriek of laughter at the idea of making myself heard in such a desert; this brought on a fit of coughing, which seemed to relieve my brain, but only to make me more conscious than ever of the excruciating sufferings of thirst.

In vain I felt around me in the hope of reaching some leaf that might afford sufficient moisture to refresh my parched lips, but every leaf was either withered, or rough, or hairy; at last I laid hold upon one that was quite unknown to me, and put it in my mouth, but as if fate were mocking me, it proved as acrid as gall.

Toiling on a little farther I felt my gun drop from my shoulder to the ground, and did not care to pick it up. But I had not gone far before I realized how I had surrendered my sole means of defence, and how as night came on I should be exposed to the jackals and hyænas; accordingly by a desperate effort I retraced my steps, and recovered the weapon. It was loaded with my last two shots, one of which I determined to use to try and light a fire by which I might lie down till morning. The twigs, however, would not ignite, and as I abandoned my attempt, I was aware of the gloom of despondency that was settling upon me; the wildest projects entered my brain, and I could

not repress the words of delirium that I knew were escaping my lips. I fell on my knees, and the last thing I seem to recollect was finding myself in the grasp of a black man, who had pounced upon me suddenly.

That Masarwa saved my life. He had killed a



SUCCOURED BY A MASARWA.

gnu that morning, and in returning towards the village to fetch his companions he had discovered me. He waited until I revived, and at once understood the signs I made that I was thirsty; opening a little leather bag that he was carrying, he took out a few berries, which I devoured eagerly, and found a welcome relief in their refreshing juice.

When I had still farther regained my faculties, I set to work to make my timely benefactor comprehend that I wanted to get back to my waggon. I used the word "koloji" to designate the vehicle. It was not a Sechuana word, but had been very generally adopted, and the man grinned intelligently as he replied, "Pata-pata?" His answer was an inquiry whether I wanted the waggon-road, for which pata-pata is a corrupt Dutch expression. I nodded assent, and he pointed cheerily to the north-east; then lifting me up, he assisted me to move on; he was considerably shorter than I was, and taking my gun with his own three assegais over his left shoulder, he made me walk with my arm over his right. Hope gave new vigour to my steps, and by being allowed to rest now and then, I succeeded in getting along.

We reached the road only as the sun had set angrily in the west; in the east the sky was lowering, and occasional flashes of lightning were followed at some interval by the rumblings of thunder. The air became much cooler, and I shivered in the evening breeze, gentle as it was; I had been in a profuse perspiration, and my clammy shirt was now clinging to my skin; I had left my coat in the waggon. After walking on wearily for another half-hour, I pleaded to be allowed to sit down for a little while; but the Masarwa would not hear of it, and after following the road a little longer he made a sudden bend into the woods. At first I hesitated about accompanying him, but pointing to his mouth

and making a lapping sound, he made me comprehend that we were to get some drinking-water. "Meci?" I inquired. "E-he, e-he," he answered, and grinned again gleefully, so that I could not refuse to let him take me where he would.

True enough, in a little sandy hollow not far from the road was a pool full of water. Although some gnus had been there within an hour and made it somewhat muddy, it was a welcome sight to me, and I drank eagerly.

When I raised my head from the pool my guide pointed to the black clouds, and made signs to me that we were in for a storm. It grew darker and darker, and very soon the rain began to fall heavily; the huge drops beating like hailstones upon my shivering body, and increasing the wretchedness of my condition. With considerate thoughtfulness the good Masarwa wrapped up my gun in his short leather mantle, and never failed to give me the support of his shoulder. I had the utmost difficulty in holding on. In some places the rain was so deep that we were wading almost to our knees.

Never was sound more welcome than the barking of my dog, which at last greeted my ears. Eberwald and Boly came running to meet us, and were inclined to reproach me with the anxiety I had caused them; they had yet to learn the misery I had endured.

Once again safely sheltered in the waggon, I

found my energies rapidly revive. I gave directions that the Masarwa should be hospitably treated, and allowed to sleep with Pit by the side of our fire; and, having partaken of a good supper, I soon fell into a sound sleep, which I required even more than on the previous night.

I was able to move about next morning without assistance, and was ready to start again. The Bakuena, who had stayed with our people since the day before, assured us that we should find the direct road impassable; and we followed his advice in making a considerable *détour* through the bush. We had not gone many hundred yards when we came upon a dead *duykerbock* that had been killed during the night by a *hyæna*. It seemed incredible that a creature so fleet as the gazelle could have been caught by an animal comparatively so unwieldy; but the investigation of the tracks left no doubt that it was the case.

Subsequently we met some Masarwas returning home laden with honey. The bees are tracked in the woods by means of the honey-bird; but in open places they are pursued by following them on their homeward way, as they fly back one by one. Their nests are usually in hollow trees, and when the entrance-holes have been discovered, it is easy to drive the bees out by smoke, and to secure the combs. In exchange for a little piece of tobacco, rather more than an inch long and about as thick as my finger, I obtained a pint of honey.

The condition of the road did not improve, and

we had to make our way through a number of very marshy places, where we frequently found dead tortoises. In the course of the day's progress I noticed some plants of the cucumber tribe, which may be reckoned amongst the most striking of the South African creepers; their handsome lobed foliage is of a bright blue-green tint, and their bright green fruit, that when ripe is dotted over with scarlet and white, stands out in beautiful contrast to the bushes over which they climb. I have seen as many as ten heads of fruit on a single plant, and no three of them in the same stage of development; the lower tip will often be quite red, the end near the stalk still green, while the intermediate parts vary through every shade of orange and yellow.

On the 5th we still found our route lying through a good deal of sand, but the woods were gradually becoming lighter, and, after a time, we emerged upon a grass plain, where the bushes grew only in patches. After travelling for about eleven miles we met a Makalahari wearing his leather apron, and carrying nothing but a couple of assegais and a hatchet. Upon my asking him whether there was any water to be found, he offered to conduct our bullocks to some pools about three miles away, and, meanwhile I proceeded to prepare our camp for the night.

A journey of an hour and a half on the 6th brought us to the Bamangwato district, and into the wide, but shallow valley of a river, of which, in the rainy season, the Shoshon is an affluent. This

valley divides the Bamangwato heights into two distinct parts, the most southerly of which is characterized by several ridges separated by transverse passes; the northern part consists of an interesting network of hills intersected by valleys running some parallel, some crosswise, in the most important of which are the Shoshong and Unicorn Rivers. These northern highlands are marked by conical peaks that rise above the table-land, and by rocky passes, of which the stones that form them are enormous. By some of their peaks the Bamangwato hills are connected with the ridge I have already mentioned on the Limpopo, and consequently also with the range in the Marico district. By the Tschopo chain the highlands are in connexion also with the hill-system of Matabele-land. The whole valley has been the scene of important episodes in the history of the Bamangwatos, and I ventured to call it the "Francis Joseph Valley;" whilst to the highest hill above it I gave the name of the "Francis Joseph Peak."

I entered Shoshong on the 8th of January. There were various considerations that induced me to make this place the northern limit of my journey. My provisions were getting low, and I had not sufficient means to procure a fresh supply; then I was unable, for want of funds, to get the servants I should require if I went farther; and, lastly, after an absence of three months, I was afraid I should be lost sight of by my patients at the diamond-fields, amongst whom I reckoned upon gaining, by my

medical practice, the means for prosecuting my third journey, to which the others were regarded by me as merely preliminary.

Before, however, turning my steps to the south, I settled upon staying some time in Shoshong, the account of which will be given in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

FROM SHOSHONG BACK TO THE DIAMOND FIELDS.

Position and importance of Shoshong—Our entry into the town—Mr. Mackenzie—Visit to Sekhomo—History of the Bamangwato empire—Family feuds—Sekhomo and his council—A panic—Manners and customs of the Bechuanas—Circumcision and the boguera—Departure from Shoshong—The African francolin—Khame's saltpan—Elephant tracks—Buff-adders—A dorn-veldt—A brilliant scene—My serious illness—Tshwene-Tshwene—The Dwars mountains—Schweinfurth's pass—Brackfontein—Linokana—Thomas Jensen, the missionary—Baharutse agriculture—Zeerust and the Marico district—The Hooge-veldt—Quartzite walls at Klip-port—Parting with my companions—Arrival at Dutoitspan.

SHOSHONG, the capital of the eastern Bamangwatos, is undoubtedly the most important town in any of the independent native kingdoms in the interior of South Africa. In the main valley of the interesting Bamangwato heights lies the bed of an insignificant stream which is full only after the summer rains, and which receives a periodically-flowing brook, called the Shoshon. On this the town is situated, so that it would seem that Shoshong is the ablative of Shoshon, i.e., on the Shoshon.

Ten years ago, before the war broke out between

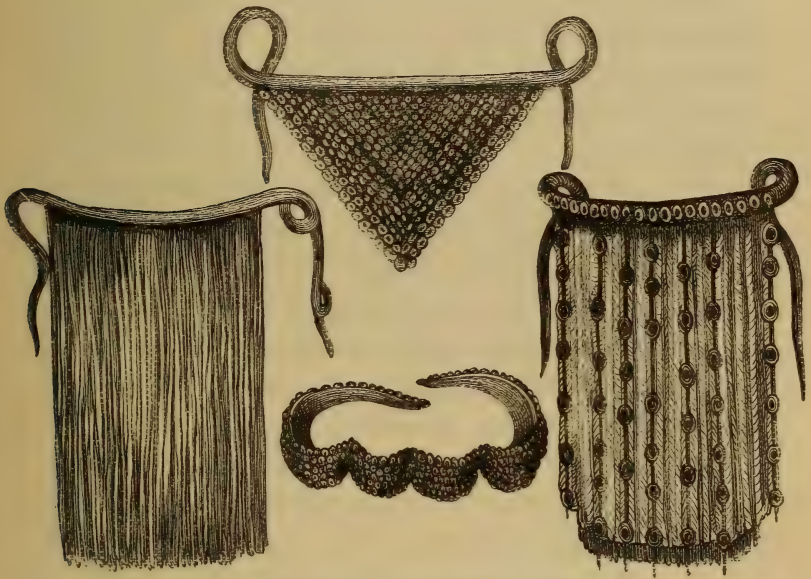
the various members of the royal family, Shoshong with its 30,000 inhabitants held the highest rank of any town throughout the six Bechuana countries, (viz. those of the Batlapins, Barolongs, Banquaketse, Bakuenas, and the eastern and western Bamangwatos) where the strength of the ruling power is



A BAMANGWATO BOY.

usually centred in their capital for the time being. The population of Shoshong is now scarcely a fifth part of what it formerly was, a falling-off to be attributed to Sekhomo, who was king of the eastern Bamangwatos at the time of my first visit; not only was he the promoter of the civil war, which cost the

lives of many of the people, but he was the means of causing a division of the tribe, which resulted in the migration of the Makalakas. Under the rule of Khame, Sekhomo's son, decidedly the most enlightened of the Bechuana princes, the town is manifestly reviving, and if during the next few years it should remain free from hostilities on the



APRONS WORN BY BAMANGWATO WOMEN.

part of the Matabele Zulus, it may be expected to rise again into its old pre-eminence amongst Bechuana towns. For white men, traders, hunters, and explorers alike, it is and always must be a place of the utmost importance, and that for the following reason: there are three great highways that lead into the four southernmost Bech-

uana kingdoms, viz., from Griqualand West, from the Transvaal, and from the Orange Free State; the whole of these unite at Shoshong, whence they all branch off again, one to the north, towards the Zambesi, another to the north-east to the Matabele and Mashona countries, and another to the north-west, to the country of the western Bamangwatos and to the Damara country, so that it follows as a matter of necessity that the admittance of a traveller into Central Africa from the south depends upon his reception by Khame at Shoshong.

The valley of the Bamangwato highland is five or six miles wide, and overgrown with grass and bush-wood; it is partly cultivated, and at its point of union with the Shoshong pass it is speckled over with some hundreds of thatched cylindrical huts, about twelve feet in diameter, and rarely more than seven feet in height, some of them overgrown with the rough dark foliage of the calabash-gourd.

Approaching the town from the south, we noticed three farmsteads and five detached brick houses about 600 yards before we entered the place. These houses were built with gables, and had much more of an European than of a Bamangwato aspect. We learnt that they were called "the white man's quarters," being occupied during part of the year by English merchants, who come to transact business with the natives, and, in years gone by, supplied provisions to the hunters, to be paid for on their return in ivory and ostrich-feathers. Amongst the

firms of this character, the most important, I believe, was that of Messrs. Francis and Clark, but, like other inland traders, they must latterly have experienced very unfavourable times.

Hitherto the king has refused to allow Europeans to purchase any land, but has permitted them to occupy the sites of their premises gratuitously.

The chief thing that struck me as we approached the town was the number of residences that had been abandoned, although in many of these repairs were now going on. In one place I observed some women daubing clay with their bare hands over a wall six feet high, made of stakes as thick as their arms driven about a foot into the ground, and fastened together with grass; while close by was a lot of children, varying from six to ten years old, busily preparing the material for their mothers' use; these youngsters evidently enjoyed their occupation vastly; they were dressed in nothing beyond their little aprons of beads or spangles, and accomplished their task by treading down the red clay in a shallow trench, chanting continually a kind of song, which was not altogether unmusical; an old woman whose scraggy limbs, parchment-skin, and general mummy-like appearance did not say much for the amount of care bestowed upon her, was pouring water into the trench from the vessels which stood beside her.

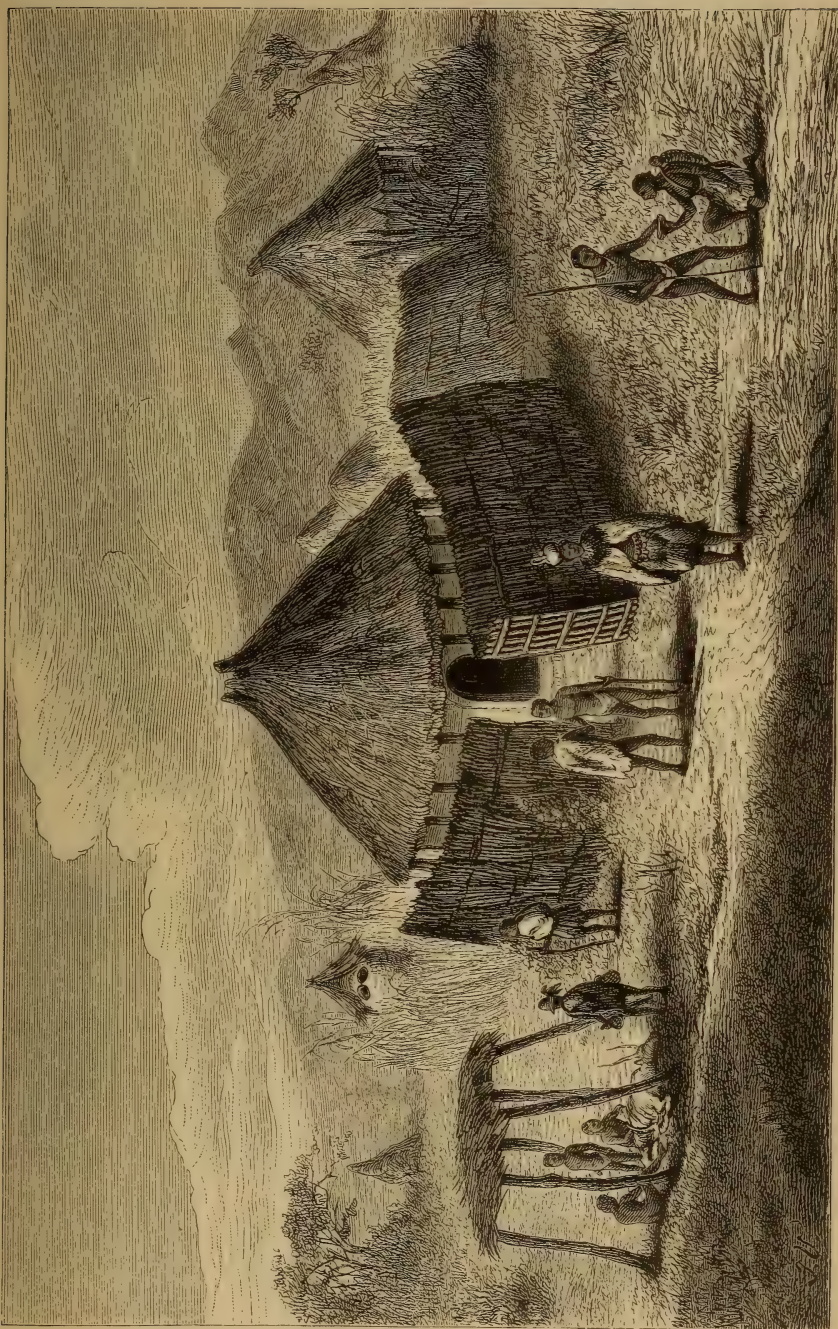
In other places women were clambering on to the newly-constructed roofs, and making them tidy by pulling off the projecting stalks, or were putting the

finishing touch to their work by fastening thin bands of grass all over the thatch.

All along the paths, in the courtyards, and especially at the hedges, crowds of inquisitive women with infants in their arms, and clusters of small children around them, had assembled to criticize the makoa (white men) and freely enough they passed their opinions about us. Most of them wore several strings of large dark blue beads round their necks, and the breasts of most of them were bare, although occasionally they had cotton jackets or woollen handkerchiefs, the prevailing colours being red and black; nearly all of them had skirts reaching to the knees, if not to the ankles.

It took us about an hour to make our way through the labyrinth of huts before we entered the glen that contains the town. This glen is about 400 yards wide at its mouth, but gradually converges to a narrow rocky pass; at first sight, indeed, it presented the appearance of a *cul-de-sac*, but the semblance was only caused by the western side of the steep pass projecting so far as to conceal the eastern, which is covered with rugged crags, and called the monkey-rock. The pass has played an important part in the history of the town.

The mission-house of the London Missionary Society lies on the side of the pass, and as we went towards it we saw three groups of houses on the right, forming the central portion of the town, of which another section lies in a rocky hollow on the other side.



BAMANGWATO HUTS AT SHOSHONG.

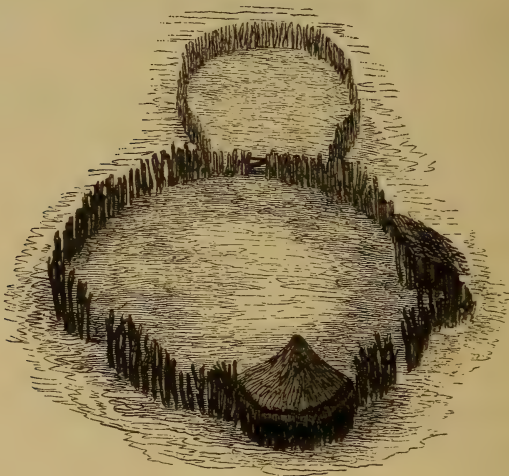
High above the river-bed on the steep to the left, could be seen the ruins of a European building, the remains of the Hermannsburg Mission Chapel, which had been used as a rampart in one of the native battles, and had been all but destroyed. The mission had previously withdrawn from Shoshong and been replaced by the London Missionary Society, of which the buildings are very comfortable, and form an important settlement, as besides the chapel and school, they include the dwellings occupied by the married native students.

At the time of my first visit to Shoshong, the principal of the mission was Mr. Mackenzie, one of the noblest-hearted men I ever met with in South Africa; since 1876, when he removed with his school to Kuruman, his place has been vacant, but his associate, Mr. Hephrun, still continues to reside at Shoshong in another house.

Having been kindly entertained at tea by Mr. Mackenzie and his wife, we started off under his escort to pay our respects to the king, who, we were told, was waiting to receive us in the kotla. We saw throngs of women in the pass under the monkey-rock carrying vessels full of water from the spring in the centre of the glen; their garment generally was a sort of toga of untanned skin, with the hair inside, fastened round the body, and leaving the right hand free to balance their pitchers on their heads, which they did so adroitly, that not a drop was spilled upon the roughest roads. The dress was commonly adorned profusely with bead orna-

ments and strips of leather, and the calves of the women's legs were covered with rings of beads and brass-wire.

The king's residence, as usual, was built round the kotla, and on our way thither, we had the opportunity of observing the respectful greetings which our conductor received from every one who met us, young and old. The place was a circular space



KOTLA AT SHOSHONG.

enclosed by a fence of strong stakes, the entrance being on the south side, opposite to which was an opening leading to another smaller enclosure, which was the king's cattle-kraal, where his farm stock was kept at night, the horses being accommodated in the kotla itself. Every night the entrances are made secure with stakes, and in times of war large fires are kindled and kept blazing inside.

I have the utmost pleasure in recording my obligations to Mr. Mackenzie. He is an accomplished man, the author of "Ten Years North of the Orange River," but his kindly attentions to myself have made me regard him with a sincere affection. I was introduced to him through having been asked to convey some letters to him in 1874 by his fellow-workers in Molopolole, and his courteous reception of me, and his subsequent kindness in the time of illness, have so endeared the remembrance of his name, that I count it as one of the chief recompenses of all my hard experience that I became acquainted with him. I regard him thoroughly as a messenger of love.

As missionary in Shoshong during the incessant discords in the royal family, he had a most difficult position to maintain. But he was the right man in the right place: with much circumspection he acted as mediator between the contending parties; gifted with discretion, and full of sympathy for all that is noble, he succeeded in smoothing down many difficulties, and arousing something like a proper sense of justice and humanity. It is entirely owing to him that Sekhomo's son, Khamé, is now one of the best native sovereigns in the whole of South Africa.

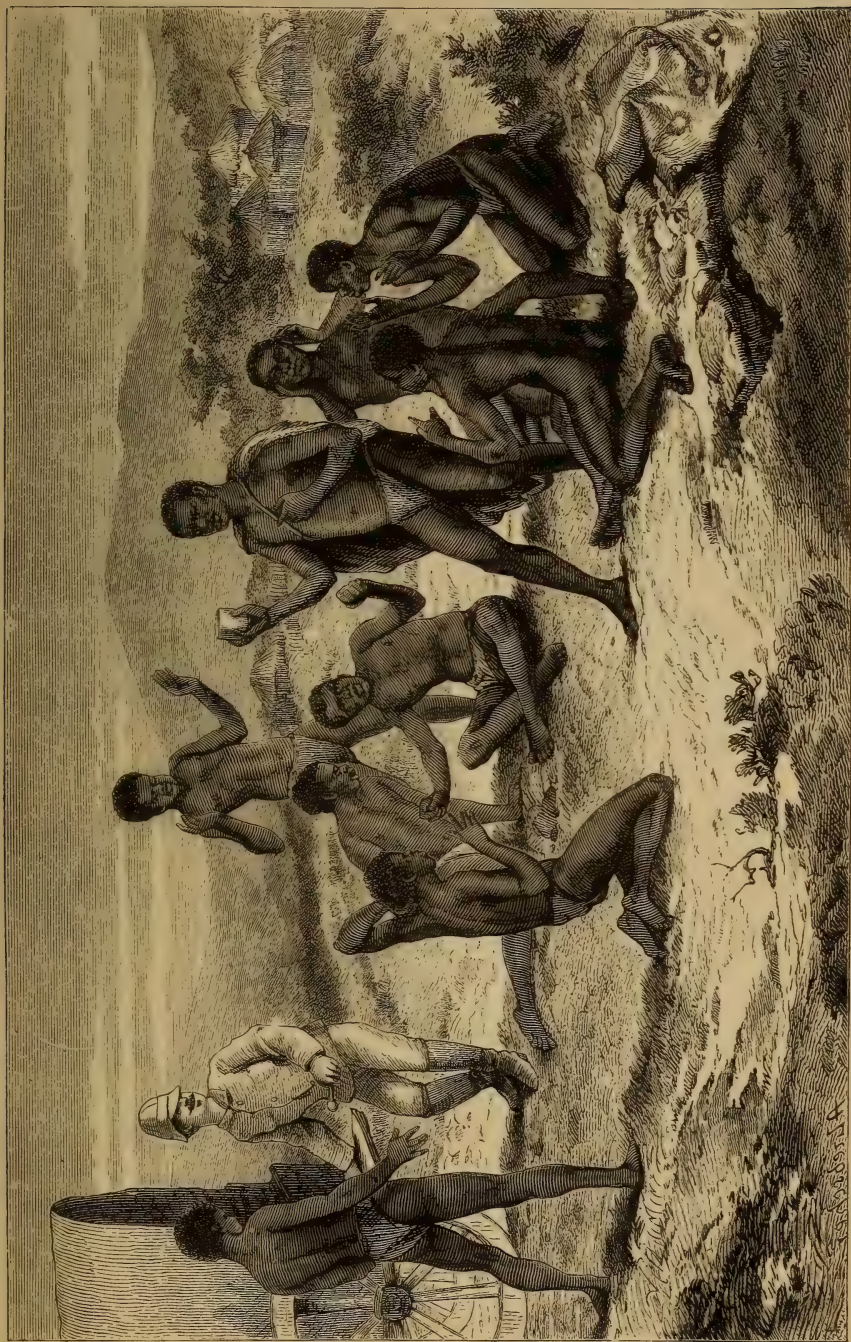
I had placed our waggon at the south-east end of the town, where it was quickly surrounded by an inquisitive crowd, and there I left it while I paid my visit to the king.

We were soon in the royal presence, and seated upon stools set for us in the kotla.

Except his begging propensities, I had no cause to complain of Sekhomo's behaviour to myself during my short sojourn in his town. He was a man above middle height, rather inclined to be stout, but with nothing in either his appearance or comportment to distinguish him from any of the courtiers who attended him, or to mark him out in any way as the ruler of an important tribe. A small leather lappet was fastened round his loins, and a short mantle of the same material hung from his shoulders; this mantle, amongst the eastern Bamangwatos, is usually made of hartebeest skin, tanned smoothly except in five spots, and sometimes ornamented in the lower corner with a black circle cut from the skin of the sword-antelope, and trimmed round the neck with glass beads.

My first visit to the king was very brief. After the interchange of a few formal phrases, which Mr. Mackenzie interpreted, I took my leave under an engagement to come again on the following day; but before entering upon the details of my intercourse with Sekhomo and his subjects, I may introduce a few episodes in the history of the Bamangwatos.

According to traditions collected by Mr. Mackenzie the Bamangwatos are descended from the Banguaketse. I have already described how the Baharutse became subdivided, and migrated from their ancestral home. After a similar subdivision had subsequently led to the formation of the two tribes of the Banguaketse and the Bakuenas, the Bamangwatos disengaged themselves from the former



SEKHOMO AND HIS COUNCIL.

of these, and took possession of a territory north of the Bakuenas, right away to the Zambesi and the Chobe. During the lifetime of Matifi, Sekhomo's great-grandfather, a fresh rupture took place, resulting in the establishment of two distinct Bamangwato communities, the western on Lake Ngami and the eastern at Shoshong.

Of the eastern empire, the founder was Towane, the younger of Matipi's two sons; Khame, the elder son, maintaining his rule in the old Bamangwato highland. Towane, in his revolt, carried off his father with him, but he treated him so badly, that the aged man sought refuge once again with Khame; but Khame, although he allowed him to enter into his territory, would not grant him permission to reside in the town, a refusal that distressed him so sorely, that he died of a broken heart. The spot where he was buried is now regarded by the Bamangwatos with much veneration.

The most upright of the seven Bamangwato kings whose names have been handed down was Khari; of him it is reported that he was bold and warlike and prudent in council, governing his dependents the Makalahari, the Madenassanas, and the Masarwas with a gentle rule. So respected was he by the neighbouring tribes, that several of them, such as the Makalakas and some of the more eastern Mashonas paid him voluntary tribute. Unfortunately, his ambition, a characteristic only too common amongst Bechuana princes, led him to destruction, and introduced a complete anarchy into his dominions.

Honoured as he was in his own country, respected by his allies, feared by his foes, he coveted a yet wider power, and in grasping at his aim courted his own fall. He formed a design against one of the inferior Mashona chiefs, but the Mashonas, already acquainted with the military tactics of the Bamangwatos, adroitly divided their army into two sections; the younger regiments were directed to advance and



BAMANGWATO HOUSE.

attack, and then to feign a retreat; the elder troops were to be in readiness to close in at the rear and to surround the enemy in Zulu fashion. The stratagem succeeded perfectly; the Mashonas brought their pretended flight to a sudden end, and turned upon their pursuers. Khari and his people had been lured into an ambushade, and not only was he himself ruthlessly massacred, but his whole army was all but annihilated.

Immediately upon this disaster, the surviving chieftains in the town proceeded to take steps for putting one of Khari's sons upon the throne. This created considerable opposition, but before the civil war that was threatening had time to develop itself, the country was invaded by the Basuto tribe of the Makololos from the Orange River district, who carried off with them all the members of Khari's



COURT DRESS OF A BAMANGWATO.

family into the north, where they were founding a new settlement on the Chobe. The prisoners succeeded after a while in effecting their escape, and Sekhomo, Khari's eldest son by birth (although not being the child of the chief wife, he was not the proper heir to the throne) lost no time in scouring the country and collecting stragglers as adherents to himself. He gathered together a force so con-

siderable, that not only did he repel an attack of the Makololos, but he cut to pieces their reserve force in the Unicorn Pass; a victory so decisive, that it gained for him the allegiance of most of the chiefs, who, at his instigation, murdered his step-brother, the true heir. Another brother, Matsheng, was saved from a similar fate by the queen-mother, who gave him timely warning to save himself by flight.

The one victory was followed up by others, and it was not long before the Bamangwatos under Sekhomo felt themselves strong enough to make a successful stand against the Matabele Zulus, who for the last thirty years had been in the habit of invading the Bechuana countries for the purpose of plunder; they recaptured much of the cattle that had been carried off, and so impressed was the Matabele king, Moselikatze, with their military skill that he long hesitated to attack them, and when he next ventured to molest them he found them more than a match for him; he sent forty armed Zulus to demand tribute from Sekhomo, but his messengers were all put to death, so that he did not make any further attempt to disturb them during the next twenty years, during which the Bamangwatos brought their cattle as far as the Matliutse. In March, 1862, at the instigation of Kirekilwe, a fugitive sub-chieftain of the Bamangwatos, the Matabele king renewed hostilities; some Makalahari while tending cattle on the Matliutse and Serule were put to death, and a village on the eastern Bamangwato heights was destroyed, only two men

escaping to carry the news to Shoshong. Without delay Khame and Khamane, the king's sons, set off to avenge the injury; they routed two companies of the Matabele without difficulty, but were almost overpowered by a third company which had been attracted to the scene by the sound of fire-arms, and although they killed some forty of their adversaries, they lost at least twenty of their own men, and had some difficulty in making a safe retreat to Shoshong. Encouraged by this temporary advantage the Matabele came on to the Francis Joseph Valley, and to the hills immediately overhanging Shoshong; they laid waste some fields, but had not the audacity to enter the Shoshon pass; after many endeavours to entice the Bamangwatos into the open plains, they were obliged to retire, and although they carried off with them a considerable quantity of cattle, Sekhomo started off in pursuit, and recovered it all within a fortnight.

As the result of all this the Bamangwatos rose in importance. They were manifestly establishing their superiority over the Matabele, hitherto regarded as the stoutest and most invincible of warriors, and the consequence was that numbers of Makalalas, Batalowtas, Mapaleng, Maownatlalas, and Baharutse, came as fugitives from the Matabele district and craved permission to settle on the Bamangwato heights.

But in order to convey a correct conception of the order of events, it is necessary to relate the proceedings of Matsheng, who, as I have

already mentioned, had saved his life by flight. He had betaken himself to the Bakuenas, and had been taken prisoner by the Matabele on one of their marauding expeditions, and although once released, he had again fallen into their hands, and had been trained and treated by them as a "le-chaga," or common soldier.

Sechele had for a long time been anxious to establish his own claim over the Bamangwatos, as being descended from his people, the Banguaketse, but finding himself unable to assert his pretensions openly, he tried secretly to enlist the sympathies of the Bamangwatos in behalf of Matsheng, and so far did he succeed that by Dr. Moffat's influence he obtained the release of the captive, and gave him a pompous reception, a proceeding that had such an effect upon Churuku, the man next in importance to Sekhomo, that he declared himself to have espoused the cause of Matsheng, who was accordingly installed at Shoshong as king, Sechele being rewarded for his services with ostrich-feathers and ivory. The dethroned Sekhomo fled to Sechele, who received him with open arms.

Matsheng, however, did not long retain the position to which he had been raised. He had been brought up as a Matabele soldier, and his spirit of despotism was far too strong for the conservative instincts of the Bamangwatos; his arrogance and cruelty soon cost him his throne, Churuku being the very first to revolt against him and to restore Sekhomo to his former power. Again Matsheng

returned to Sechele, who received him with unvarying courtesy and kindness. All this happened in 1859, consequently before the attack of the Matabele that I have described.

It may be interesting to know that although Matsheng was universally regarded as Sekhomo's step-brother, he was not really the son of his father Khari; he was the son of the acknowledged queen, but he was not born until some years after Khari's death; the rank, however, of the first-born and legitimate son was conceded to him, whilst Sekhomo, a son by a wife of the second grade, though older in years, was reckoned as illegitimate.

It was in 1864 that Sekhomo frustrated Sechele's attack upon Shoshong. In the following year, when the "boguera" was being celebrated, and Sekhomo observed that neither of his two sons was taking part in the ceremonial, he was so angry that he caused them to be "enchanted" by the molois for a whole year, a proceeding on his part that had no other effect than enlisting the sympathies of the younger regiments on their behalf. His rage reached its height when Khame, who had married Churuku's daughter, not only refused for himself, but prohibited his wife from taking any share in the rites of the boguera, a time-honoured institution which Sekhomo positively insisted on as indispensable for any one aspiring to be acknowledged as a future queen. He would have liked to procure the assassination of Churuku, but he dared not seek his assassins amongst the Bamangwatos, nor could

any Matabele fugitive be induced to undertake the task. He tried all manner of threats and persuasions to alienate their adherents, and even determined upon an assault upon the huts where his sons resided. Getting together a number of his partisans, he bade them fire; not a man, however, would obey his orders, and when he raised his own gun to take aim, it was struck out of his hand. Dreading the vengeance which he felt sure would follow upon his deed, he ran off and took refuge with his mother; but his sons, so far from exacting retribution, agreed to keep him upon the throne upon the sole condition that he would commit no further act of hostility against themselves or any other members of the Christian community. Although Sekhomo did not hesitate to give the required pledge, it was only in accordance with his character that he should continue to devise clandestine schemes against the objects of his hatred.

Accordingly, before long, he sent to Sechele's quarters and invited Matsheng to come and join him in a conspiracy against his sons. In March he made his attack, having by this time gained so many of the Bamangwatos to his side, that Khamé and Khamané, after holding out as long as they could in the ruins of the chapel, were obliged to retreat with their followers to the mountains.

For about a month fighting went on in a desultory way without bringing decided advantage to either party, when Sekhomo, with the assistance of some

Makalahari, stormed the peaks of the mountains to which his sons had withdrawn. They held out firmly for more than a week, when the want of water compelled them to make a complete surrender. Khame distinctly refused, however, to return to paganism; his life was spared, but no mercy was shown to his followers, many of them, including Churuku, being ruthlessly slaughtered.

In May, Matsheng reappeared in Shoshong once more to assert his claim. Khame and Khamane openly avowed their opposition, but did not take up arms. Sekhomo, too, was weary of his step-brother, and again resorted to stratagem. He called an assembly, inviting both his sons and Matsheng to his kotla, intending to get them to enter first, when they might be surrounded and disposed of at a single blow; but they got scent of his design, and took care to enter last, so that the plot was defeated. A second scheme failed as totally as the first; his friends deserted him, and he was compelled to fly. Thus Matsheng was for the second time declared ruler of the Bamangwatos.

Sekhomo fled from quarter to quarter. He first betook himself to the Manupi in the country of the Banguaketse; then to the Makhosi, whence he was expelled by Sechele's order, and finally he took refuge with Khatsisive at Kanye.

Matsheng had no sooner again felt his feet as sole governor, than he fell into his old ways, and showed himself a thorough autocrat. He set to work to undermine the influence of Khame and Khamane,

declared that Christianity was hostile to the welfare of the tribe, and persevered in every possible way in doing violence to the religious sentiments of his people. Finding his instructions disregarded, he determined to dispose of Khame. He dared not use violent means, and the only course that suggested itself was to call in the aid of the molois; but neither did the operation of magic prove effectual, nor did he succeed in getting some poison, for which he applied to a European trader.

His reign at last came to an untimely end. Whilst Khame was on a visit to Khatsisive he met Sechele, who furnished him with troops to enable him to expel Matsheng. An encounter took place in the Francis Joseph valley, at the mouth of the Shoshon pass, in which Matsheng was worsted, the engagement being remarkable for the circumstance that Matsheng's allies, the Matabele, under the command of Kuruman, the son of Moselikatze, fought on horseback. Prepared for this, Khame posted his best marksmen as advanced skirmishers behind the bushes so effectually, that the mounted Matabele, once dispersed, were exposed to a concealed fire, and unable to recover themselves. Kuruman deserted in the very middle of the fight, and Matsheng, with all his followers, after plundering the house of Mr. Drake, a trader in the district, fled in great disorder.

From that day forward the legitimate ruler was never again seen in Shoshong. He retired first to the Mashwapong heights on the central Limpopo in

the eastern Bamangwato land, but was not allowed to remain in peace. Khamane drove him from his refuge, and he retreated to the Mabolo Mountains. After his expulsion Khame was declared king, and for a time there seemed some chance of the bitter feuds coming to an end.

Khame, however, appeared incapable of learning by experience. His soft heart revolted at the thought of keeping Sekhomo in banishment, and after exacting a promise from him that he would keep the peace, he recalled him to Shoshong, when he very soon resumed his old devices. First of all he promoted dissension between the two brothers, by awarding Khamane not only the cattle taken from Matsheng, but by assigning him a village of the Manansas, a people of the Albert country, the mountain district south of the Victoria Falls. Khamane unfortunately suffered himself to be beguiled by his father's wiliness; his ambition to secure the sovereign power led him to turn a deaf ear to Khame's representations, neither would he be swayed by the remonstrances of Mr. Mackenzie, who tried hard to bring about such a good understanding as might promise a lasting peace in the land.

To avoid further collision, Khame now migrated with a very considerable proportion of the Shoshong population, settling on the River Zooga, in the territory of the western Bamangwatos, where he was received with much cordiality and regarded with esteem and affection by the Batowanas. Unfortunately

his people began to be decimated by fever, so that before long he had no alternative but to make his way back to his own country.

Such was the state of affairs on my first arrival at Shoshong.

My first concern now was to replenish my stock of provisions, which was very low. I found this a much more difficult matter than I expected, and it was only by Mr. Mackenzie's assistance that I was able to procure the simplest and most indispensable articles. It was of itself a difficulty quite enough to make me renounce all intention of extending my journey as far as the Zooga, or Botletle.

On the 9th, I was favoured with a visit from the king and his linyakas, an honour subsequently repeated so often as to become a positive nuisance, as henceforward, so long as we stayed in the place, we had to receive his majesty and his council of "black crows" once a day, and occasionally twice. When he arrived, Sekhomo would keep on shaking my hand, while his factotum, who could speak Dutch, would be perpetually begging for something in his master's name. The king at other times would stand with his arms akimbo, his myrmidons squatting around him in a semicircle and imitating everything he did; if he laughed, they laughed; if he gaped, they gaped; if he yawned, they yawned; and one day, when his majesty burnt his mouth with some tea that was too hot, they all puckered up their faces as if they likewise were experiencing the pain; when

he turned to go home, they rose and followed him in single file, like a flock of geese.

One day I received a visit from a travelling Dutch hunter, who was returning with his family from a six months' excursion in the Zooga and Mababi districts; during that time he had killed twenty-one elephants and fifteen ostriches. He recounted two interesting adventures that he had with lions, in one of which his little son had played quite an heroic part. His object in coming to me now was to consult me professionally, as three of his children were lying ill with intermittent fever.

According to Mr. Mackenzie's estimate, Sekhomo's actual revenue was equivalent to about 3000*l.* a year, and consisted of cattle, ivory, ostrich-feathers, and skins. He had no state-expenditure whatever. The free Bamangwatos were allowed the produce of their herds, such ostrich-feathers as were of inferior quality, and one tusk of every elephant that they killed.

Throughout our stay in Shoshong the downpour of rain was almost incessant; nevertheless, our waggon was constantly besieged by a crowd of visitors and workpeople, so that quite a brisk trade was carried on; this, on one occasion, was slightly interrupted by our bullocks becoming suddenly restive.

In the midst of the general peace the population was thrown one morning into a state of disturbance by the intelligence that hostile Matabele were on their way to the place. The residents were seized with a panic, the king came hurrying down to me

in a state of excitement, and borrowed one of my guns, which, as I might have expected, I had considerable difficulty in getting back again. He showed me his palladium, an amulet made of a lion's claw, which was supposed to render him invulnerable; he had at once given orders that his people should betake themselves to the heights overhanging the town. Everybody, therefore, with all speed, was collecting his few effects and preparing to drive the sheep and cows to the hills. The state of confusion reached its height when the report of fire-arms was heard close outside the town, but although it was soon ascertained that the shots had only been fired at a stray hyæna, it was long before the apprehension could be allayed that the Matabele were commencing an assault. Next day a Boer hunter from the western Matabele country, a son of the renowned elephant-hunter Pit Jacobs, who resides on the Tati River, came into the place, and assured the people that there was not the least foundation for their alarm; but so completely had the impression of their danger got possession of them that his representations received no credit whatever, and even the European traders began to take measures for defence. Under the circumstances, Mr. Mackenzie advised me to take my departure as quickly as I could, as although there was nothing likely to happen to compromise my personal safety, there was no answering for the security of my property.

When Sekhomo heard that we were going away,

he expressed his regret that we, whom he regarded as his friends, should be forsaking him in his trouble. As a parting gift I gave him a blue woollen dress for one of his seven wives, and he in return presented me with a bundle of grey ostrich-feathers.

In no other native town throughout my journey did I succeed so well as here in making additions to my ethnographical collection. The resident traders showed some annoyance at my proceedings, but I managed to exchange nearly all the goods I had in my waggon for various objects of local handicraft. I obtained a great many assegais and hatchets, some daggers, knives, kiris, and sticks, wooden pillows, pots, pans, spoons, magic dice of various materials, as well as a large variety of snuff-boxes, gourd-vessels, articles for the toilet, ornaments, aprons, cups, dolls, and toys made of clay. Perhaps the most noteworthy amongst my acquisitions were some of Sekhomo's war and rain drums, a little ivory fetish, some kiris made of rhinoceros horn, and several whistles. I bartered away some of my skins of pallah-antelopes, leopards, lynxes, and caracals, and for a small extra payment had some of them back again after they had been converted into garments. The Bamangwato workmanship differs very little from that of all other Bechuana tribes; their huts, though somewhat smaller and more slightly built, are most like those of the Barolongs, but they have larger corn-bins of unbaked clay than any I saw elsewhere.

Nor did my naturalist's collection fail to gain some curious contributions. Amongst the lizards I found a beautiful striped sort, with a metallic lustre of brown, dark green, and blue; and some of other kinds, without stripes, that seemed particularly tame.

Before describing my return journey, I will append some further details of Bechuana customs to those which I have given in the previous chapter.

As a rule a heathen Bechuana has but one wife, though the more well-to-do not unfrequently have two; the number allowed to the sub-chieftains varies from three to six; the kings being permitted to have more, although not so many as those in the Marutse empire. A man of competent means presents his newly-married wife with several head of sheep or oxen.

On entering a town, a traveller picks up some of the stones in his path, and after throwing them into a bush, or laying them in a forked branch of a tree, breathes a prayer that he may reach the end of his journey in safety.

The skin, horns, or flesh of a sacred animal, such as the duykerbock among the Bamangwatos or the crocodile among the Bakuenas, are not allowed to be touched.

An owl, sitting upon a hut, is considered of evil omen; and the linyakas are called in to purify the spot that has been defiled by the touch of the bird.

An animal observed to do anything that accord-

ing to Bechuana notions is unusual, is at once considered dangerous, and must be either killed or submitted to the treatment of a linyaka. For instance, if a goat should spring upon a housetop, it would be immediately struck with an assegai; or if a cow in a cattle-kraal should persist in lashing the ground with its tail, it would be pronounced not to be an ordinary cow, but would be considered "tiba," and as such sure to bring disaster, disease, or death upon its owners. A rich man would forthwith have the animal put to death; but a poor man is permitted to sell it either to a white man, or to one of another tribe. It is only in cases of this kind that a Bechuana parts with his cows at all.

Ordinarily no woman is allowed to touch either a cow or a bullock; the tending of cattle, except in Hottentot families, being always assigned to boys and men.

As I have already implied, the Bechuana form of government is to a certain extent constitutional; all legislation or decisions of public importance having to be discussed in the "pitsho" or assembly-house; it must be acknowledged, however, that in most cases, especially those in which the king has any influence with the sub-chiefs, every question is settled by a foregone conclusion. As with other Bantu peoples, the king (the morena or koshi) is practically paramount in all public functions; the chiefs that are associated with him belonging either to his own tribe or being such as have fled to him for protection, or have obtained leave to settle in his

land. Khatsisive and the chiefs of the Manupi and western Baharutse may be cited as examples of this ; they occupy separate villages, at divers distances apart, some of them lying close together and others being a considerable way from the royal residence. Wherever they are, each of these villages has a small enclosure which represents the kotla, and where the matters to be discussed in the royal kotla are submitted to preliminary debate ; and when the king wants to gather a general concourse of chiefs for important business he sends a messenger, who lays a bough of a tree in the enclosure, which is understood to be a summons.

When war is contemplated, the council is generally held in the outskirts of the town in preference to the kotla, as being less likely to be overheard ; the name given to such a council is "letshulo," the same that is used for the hunt instituted by the linyakas for the purpose of procuring rain.

Under the presidency of their chiefs all the inhabitants of a village are at liberty to attend the council, and as every minute circumstance is discussed with the most unlimited freedom the clatter of voices is often something extraordinary.

When a meeting has been called to administer justice, it must be confessed that the first thing taken into account is whether the accused is a favourite at court ; in that case, as often as not, he is allowed to depart scot free. When a theft has been committed, a royal herald is sent through the town, who at once announces the fact, and declares

the king's intention to punish the offender; the threat, more often than not, has the effect of inducing the culprit to lay the stolen goods under cover of night in some public place, whence they may be restored to their owner. Very frequently the services of the linyakas are called in, the magic dice are thrown, and other devices adopted to detect the offender.

I may mention one of the linyakas' modes of operation in these cases. After a full investigation of the matter, all the parties suspected are summoned to the kotla. The linyaka places them in a circle and walks round them several times, monotoning as he goes, "The thief who has done this deed must die to-day." He next sends for a bowl of maize-pap, which he doles out with a wooden spoon, saying over every spoonful, "The thief that swallows this pap shall die to-day." This done, he proceeds to make a careful scrutiny of each separate countenance, and then retires to throw his mysterious dice. In a short time he cries aloud, "I have found the thief!" Going once more round the circle, he compels every one in succession to open his mouth, the result ordinarily being that all but one has swallowed the mouthful. In his fear of bringing the curse of death upon himself, the culprit has retained the pap in his mouth, intending to spit it out at the first chance, the precaution he uses of course revealing his guilt.

A criminal on his first conviction of theft has to restore double or fourfold what he has stolen; on

being repeatedly convicted he is sentenced to have the tips of his fingers scalded off; an incorrigible offender has to lose the whole of his hand. Murder is usually considered a capital offence; but a man under sentence of death may redeem his life by paying a sum of money, or its equivalent in kind, to the victim's next-of-kin.

During the time of Matsheng's rule a singular case occurred of a man killing his brother from avarice. The aged father had announced his intention of leaving the bulk of his property to his elder son, and the younger determined to get rid of his brother, hoping thereby to inherit the whole. "Brother," he said to him one day, "did you not hear our father say that the linyaka wanted a monkey's skin to restore him the use of his limbs? Will you go with me to the hills and shoot a monkey?" The elder brother acquiesced, and they started off together. An hour brought them to the foot of the rise, when the younger suggested that it would be better for them to begin to scour the hill from opposite directions, a proposition to which the elder brother readily assented. An old woman was gathering berries on the hill, and observing the peculiarity of the young man's movements could not help suspecting that he intended some mischief, and following him unperceived saw that, instead of going straight up the hill, he crept round to the right and as soon as he came within sight of his brother, took deliberate aim and shot him dead. In pretended consternation, he returned to the town, relating how

by miserable misadventure he had shot his poor brother, supposing him to be an ape in the bushwood. The old woman hurried to Matsheng and gave her evidence as to the real facts of the case so clearly, that instead of furthering his scheme to become his



TRAINING THE BOYS.

father's heir, the wretch was by the king's order carried back to the scene of his crime, and was there himself shot with his brother's gun.

Among other customs which seem to belong more or less to all the Bantu tribes with whom I came in contact, there are some which remind us of the

Mosaic law. Held as of the highest importance by the heathen Bechuana is the rite of circumcision; until it has been submitted to, no youth is supposed to have arrived at man's estate, and no woman is considered of marriageable age. The ceremony, however, does not universally or necessarily indicate the attainment of a state of maturity, as is the case with the breaking off of the front teeth by the Matongas and Mashukulumbe; it is rather an initiation into the system of hardening which every youth is required to undergo before he is counted worthy of the titles of "mona" or "ra" which betoken a man's estate.

Called the "boguera," the observance is put into force upon boys after they have reached their ninth year. The ceremony is performed at intervals varying from two to five years, according to the extent of a tribe; the period of its exactment being held to be a time of great festivity in the towns. If the boys do not present themselves voluntarily, they are brought under compulsion, and as a preparatory office they are smeared all over with a solution of chalk; the girls wear nothing but belts made of pieces of reed or aprons of genets' tails, their breasts and faces being also whitened with chalk. The solemnization of the rite takes place outside the town, old men acting as operators with the boys and old women with the girls.

The boguera happened to be celebrated at the time of my visit to Shoshong, so that I had the best opportunity of becoming acquainted with its details.

Singing as they go, the young people of both sexes, accompanied by the linyakas, proceed beyond the town to the appointed spot, where the boys are put through a drill in manly exercises, and the girls are formally initiated into domestic duties, such as carrying wood and fetching water; throughout their performances they keep up their monotonous chant; and as their figures are all white by the application of chalk, nothing can be imagined much more grotesque than the appearance they present as they go through their series of gymnastics.

The boys are next marched off in detachments to the kotla, where they have all to be beaten with rods. Bare of all clothing, except their little girdle and their sandals, which they are permitted to hold in their hands, they are placed in two rows, back to back, and made to kneel down whilst a man, generally their next-of-kin, stands in front of each and proceeds to deliver his lashes, which the lads parry as best they can by the dexterous manipulation of the sandals; they are required to keep on singing, and to raise each foot alternately, marking the measure of the chant.

All the youths who submit to the boguera at one time are formed into a company, and the more sons a Bechuana can bring to the ceremony, the prouder he is. A chief will generally try to introduce a son of his own or of a near relative to take command of the troop, and an *esprit de corps* is frequently excited which sometimes has a beneficial effect upon the quarrels that arise at court. The friendship thus formed

often remains unbroken, in spite of the commander avowing himself a Christian and being baptized.

The girls, so long as the ceremonial lasts, are not allowed to sleep; to keep them awake they are made to spend the night sitting upon wooden corn-pounders, of which the equilibrium is so unstable



BAMANGWATO GIRLS DRESSED FOR THE BOGUERA.

that the first attempt to get a wink of sleep sends the damsel toppling over.

The real object of the entire ceremonial is to discipline and harden the young, particularly the boys; the rite is followed by a succession of hunting excursions, organized and kept up for several succes-

sive years; the members of a company are told off into sets, and under the guidance of an experienced hunter are taken out first to chase antelopes and gazelles, and in course of time to pursue elephants and buffaloes. On these expeditions they are designedly exposed to many hardships; they are compelled to make long marches through districts where there is no water; only in exceptional cases are they suffered to approach the fire even in the severest weather, and they are forced to experience the long-continued pangs of hunger.

A Bechuana will commonly reckon his age from the date of a boguera; when asked how old he is, he will mention the company to which he belongs, and will refer to the names of one or two of its best-known members.

According to Mr. Mackenzie, the "tshwaragana moshang," or ceremonial of alliance between two chiefs, ought not to be omitted from an account of Bechuana customs. When vows of fidelity are exchanged between a ruler and any other chief or refugee, some domestic animal is slaughtered; and the stomach being cut open so as to expose the entrails, the two parties plunge their hands into the midst of them, and mutually shake them together.

The various forms of purification should likewise be mentioned. There are special rites to be performed by all who return either from war or from hunting-expeditions; arms, prisoners, plunder, have all to be subjected to a process of cleansing; whoever has touched a corpse must be purified; women

after childbirth have to live apart from their husbands from one to three months, according to their means; a period of seclusion is prescribed for all who have been seriously ill; in all these cases the linyakas are invariably consulted and receive substantial rewards, one of the most common directions which they give consisting, as I have said, in ordering the woolly hair to be cut off with a knife or small sharpened horn.

We left Shoshong for the Marico district on the 16th of February. The weather was still unpropitious, and our progress was retarded by the miry state of the soil; in many places the water was two feet deep, and the dense growth of the woods did not permit us to make a *détour* to avoid it. The entire district south-eastwards between Shoshong and the Limpopo was one great forest. In some places the soil continued salt, and salt-pans were of not unfrequent occurrence; towards the south, on the banks of the Sirorume, it became rather undulated and very sandy. The journey occupies three days; and in the winter there are only two places where fresh water can be obtained.

In the course of the next day's march I made my first acquaintance with a bird that throughout South Africa is known as "det fasant." Hearing a sharp, shrill cackle in the underwood, I turned and saw a brown bird (*Francolinus nudicollis*) perched on a tree-stump. It belongs to the part-ridge tribe, and is to be found in many of the wooded and well-watered districts that I afterwards

visited. It is common likewise in Central South Africa. The francolins live either in pairs or in small coveys, and the cock would appear to be a most watchful guardian, not only calling out upon any approach of danger, but even whilst scratching the ground for food, and on retiring to a tree to roost; the habit of crying out whenever it perches, makes it an easy prey to the sportsman.

On the 18th we passed a shallow salt-pan, nearly elliptical in shape, about two feet deep, and some hundred yards in its greater length; it contained a very salt, milky-looking fluid. When the weather is dry, fresh water is only to be found in some pools in the rocks at the northern end. The lake lay still and silent in a slight depression in the forest, surrounded by a broad band of bright green sward; neither rushes nor water-lilies rose above its surface, but its shores, sloping gently down, were covered by trees and bushwood, in some parts so impenetrable that only the fleet little duykerbock would have a chance of making its way between the stems; in other places low acacia bushes sprouted up below the underwood from a single stock; flowers were abundant everywhere, and the whole scene was like a dead sea set in the midst of a fragrant and richly-wooded tract of land.

As a mark of esteem for the magnanimous king of the Bamangwatos, I gave this lake the name of Khame's Salt-pan. On the shore I found fragments of greenstone and chalcedony, and further back, amongst the thorn-bushes, quartzite and limestone.

There were numerous vestiges of the smaller gazelles, gnus, zebras, and giraffes, all of which find rich pasturage on the plains extending east and west of the Limpopo.

Amongst the trees I was particularly struck by



KHAME'S SALT-PAN.

one, the wood of which I afterwards learned was of great value; this was a mimosa, known amongst the Boers as the "Knopi-dorn;" it often grows straight up to the height of fifty feet, without a single bifurcation; its yellowish-grey bark is

covered by excrescences sometimes two inches long, with sharp, hooked thorns at their ends. The timber is in use for building purposes, but it is considered a material especially adapted for making waggons.

In the afternoon we passed some salt-pools, in which I was surprised to find some half-starved fish. The fish themselves were not of any uncommon kind; to me the perplexing thing was how they could have made their way to so great a height above the table-land, and the only explanation I could give was that they had been carried thither by birds.

Evening overtook us in the valley of the upper Sirorume, just at the spot where the stream makes its way over interesting shelves of sandstone, thence to turn south, and then south-south-east to join the Limpopo.

While proceeding through the sandy forest in the inner bend of the Sirorume, we noticed from the waggon an appearance in the ground as though the long grass had been flattened by a heavy roller six or seven feet wide. It proved to be an elephant-track, and two Bamangwatos on their way to the Transvaal informed us that it was made by a herd of the great small-tusked elephants that were known to be wandering about the boundaries of Sekhomo's and Sechele's territory. I entertained no doubt that it was the same herd of which I had heard before, and which continued to haunt the same region for two years afterwards, when it was destroyed by the Damara emigrants.

At no great distance ahead of us the river-valley made a turn, above which, westwards and southwards as far as the eye could reach, stretched a dense underwood. Soon afterwards we descended for the second time into the river-valley of the Siro-rume, designated by the English as the "brack reeds." Here for miles both ways the river-bed is flat, and forms a sort of fen overgrown with rushes. I crossed this no less than three times, on each occasion finding it very prolific in puff-adders. Our search for drinking-water proved unavailing, and as our stock of meal was rapidly diminishing, we felt the necessity of hurrying on as quickly as possible; but on the 21st we came on the top of the tableland upon one of those unexpected rain-pools, which I described in my account of my first journey.

Three days before, I had shot two specimens of the puff-adder (*Vipera arietans*), each over three feet long, and as thick as my arm; they had heart-shaped heads, and two very long and crooked fangs. The scaly skin of this snake varies in colour from yellow to dark brown, consisting of alternate light and dark bands. It is to be met with almost everywhere between the sea and the Zambesi, but is far more abundant in some districts than in others; especially frequenting places overgrown by thorns, as less liable to be visited by snake-eagles. Most of the specimens I saw were lying dormant on the margins of thickets, or on the edges of pathways, coiled round and round, and flat as a platter; their sluggishness is quite remarkable, and

I noticed more than one in pools of water from which they could never escape. So sharply are the fangs bent backward, that the puff-adder does not inflict a wound in the same way as the ordinary species; it has to turn the front part of its body quite back, lower its head, and in this position to fling itself at its victim; this it is capable of doing from a distance of several feet, and I have been a witness of this mode of attack both in Cape Colony and in Natal.

There is another peculiarity about this kind of adder which has been noticed particularly in the western parts of Cape Colony. When any one comes across one of them, his attention is very often attracted to it in the first instance by the singular noise it makes between hissing and spitting; and on looking at the creature more closely, he occasionally finds its body all perforated, and a number of little snakes issuing from the orifices; it has hence been concluded that the brood of the puff-adder thus eats its way into the world. For my own part, I do not concur with this theory, and I would offer an explanation of the phenomenon, in which I am supported by the testimony of an eye-witness. I believe that of all the South African snakes, none more than this is distinguished by devotion to its young; and whenever danger approaches, I think it inflates itself, and in its agitation rushes upon its foe with expanded jaws, and, whether designedly or not I do not say, swallows some portion of its teeming brood. These are prevented by another inflation of the mother's

jaws from escaping where they had entered, and so force for themselves an exit where they can.

After descending the Puff-adder heights on the lower Sirorume, we entered the valley of the Limpopo, known also as the Crocodile River; the hilly district on the left shore terminated in a woody table-land to the west, the right shore being quite flat, and enclosed by prairie-like plains. The river-bed was sandy, and varied from thirty to ninety feet in width; the bank was steep, and covered with impenetrable bush or long grass. On the shore I found frequent traces of crocodiles, and a few of hippopotamuses; in the more open and clayey parts I also noticed the tracks of lions and leopards. In the adjacent places we observed indications of the existence of koodoos, pallahs, waterbucks, bushbucks, hartebeests, gnus, giraffes, and zebras.

On the 22nd we reached the mouth of the Notuany, a river that rises in the Transvaal, in the western Marico district; it flows only after very heavy rain, and even then not over the whole of its course, which is 150 miles long; it is deep, and lies, as it were, in a trench; ever and again pools occur along its shores, which always contain fish, and sometimes crocodiles. From the west, the Notuany takes up a considerable number of sand-rivers. The stream was now flowing, and as its mouth was much blocked up by reeds, we felt pretty sure that no crocodiles would have made their way overland to the water, and so we ventured to enjoy a bath at the ford, which was moderately deep.

On the southern side of the river-mouth we found one of the "dornveldts" common in the Limpopo valley, a wide tract of rich soil, densely overgrown with bushes of the *Acacia horrida*, six feet in height. These are districts which might well rejoice the heart of a European landowner; but for years to come no doubt they are destined to lie fallow.

For two days I remained on the banks of the Notuany, finding both in the animals and plants most interesting material for study. I shot a grey-horned owl and a carrion kite.

Just as we were approaching the mouth of the Marico, while we were crossing one of the numerous rain-channels that make their way down, our axle broke, but we managed to make it hold together till we reached a farm at no great distance.

I had the good fortune next day to meet with two herds of pallahs. These creatures appear to range over the whole country, thence to Central Africa, and hereabouts take the place of the blessbocks of the southern grass plains.

Our progress began now to be very considerably retarded by the rains; for some weeks it had been as wet as it was in Shoshong, so that we had to go through a succession of marshes for nearly half the distance along the Limpopo and Marico valley, being perpetually unable to find a dry spot for our encampment at night.

During the morning march of the 26th, our attention was arrested by a brilliant scene. On the left bank of the Marico, spreading out over the best

half of a large meadow, was a carpet of fiery red, set in a frame of verdant sward, and enclosed with the dark green foliage of the mimosa. This spectacle of beauty was caused by masses of flowering aloes, which sent forth their gorgeous spikes of blossom some three or four feet above the cluster of prickly leaves. Where the aloes were thickest, I noticed that they were not unfrequently overhung by a beautiful sulphur-coloured creeper.

An attack of illness on the 28th made me discontinue our march. Whether it was the result of my continuous exertions, or the effect of the miasma of the district, or whether I had taken a chill from the dampness of the places in which we had camped, I cannot tell, but certain it was that I found myself quite unable to move, and had to be lifted out of the waggon; a violent sickness came on, my head became as heavy as lead, and I was quite incapable of answering the numerous questions which my friends in their anxiety kept putting to me. My senses soon quitted me altogether, and for two hours I lay in a condition of delirium, from which I was only roused by being vigorously bathed with cold water. Böly sobbed aloud in his distress. F. ran hither and thither like a madman, and Eberwald showed me such sympathy and unremitting attention as endeared him to me more than ever. Recovering my consciousness, I resolved to bleed myself. I was quite satisfied that no gentler measure could relieve the extreme pressure of blood on the head. The operation was quite successful, and im-

mediate relief followed. Nature did the rest, and in three days' time I had so far recovered, that we were able to proceed on our way.

Leaving the actual valley of the Marico on the 3rd of March, we crossed the saddle, and entered a valley intersected by the Bechuana-spruit, and enclosed on the southern side by the interesting Bertha heights. On their south-western spurs lies Chwhene-Chwene, the town belonging to the Batlokas, under Matlapin, their chief; it is situated in Sechele's territory, which extends from the mouth of the Sirorume to the Dwars mountains. In the underwood in the hollow I found some morula-trees bearing ripe fruit.

As soon as we could on the following day we made our way towards the town, which was tolerably clean, the farmsteads and huts being larger and more commodious than those of most Bechuanas; in some cases they were surrounded by gardens. The fields were sown, but only partially, with corn, maize, and Kaffir sugar-cane. Just outside the town I came to a halt, because some of the Batlokas told me that there were merry-makings going on within, and the Morena was tipsy.

Descending the slope from the table-land, we found several deep holes in the hard grey limestone containing cool spring water. The view from the springs was very striking. The thinly-wooded valley in front of us was several miles in width, and stretched away eastwards to the Marico. It was bounded on the south by the countless summits of

the chain of the Dwars hills. To the pass by which we crossed these heights, I gave the name of "Schweinfurth's Pass," whilst the next one, further to the west, I called "Rohlf's Pass." From the top of the hills we could see the first of the farms on the plain; on reaching the bottom, we met a Boer migrating into the Damara country.

It was satisfactory, on arriving at Brackfontein Farm, to find that its owner was a smith, and able to repair our broken waggon. His two sons asked me to join them on a hunting excursion, but I did not feel myself sufficiently convalescent to accept their invitation, although the abundance of game in the locality made it very enticing. In the densely-wooded parts of the Dwars mountains there were gazelles and koodoo-antelopes, and in the more open parts at the base, and on the eastern and southern grass-plains were both kinds of gnus, zebras, and springbucks; other antelopes and ostriches were likewise occasionally to be seen.

When I left Brackfontein on the 12th, I turned to the south, crossing the Bushveldt, in order to reach Linokana, the native town in the Marico highlands.

Without entering into a minute description of the Bushveldt, I may here simply mention that it is a wooded hill-country, consisting of low ridges, sandy eminences, and isolated peaks, the soil being covered with rich grass.

I left the district by the Buisport or Buispass, passing the Markfontein, Sandfontein, and Witfontein farms. Zwart, the owner of the first of these,

bought it for 300*l.*; it is of very considerable size. Zwart had previously been an elephant-hunter, and



BUISPORT, ROCKY CLEFT IN THE BUSHVELDT.

had visited the Damara country and the falls of the Zambesi before he settled down to farming. At a hartebeest-hunt at Sandfontein we met with a Dutch-

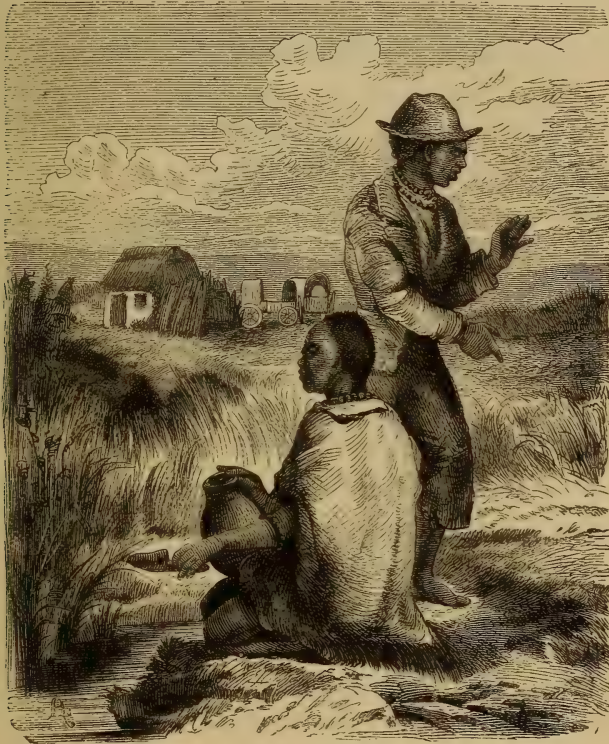
man, who sold goods on account of Mr. Taylor, the merchant at Sechele. Although he only stayed here for a few days in each month, we were most hospitably entertained by him and his kind old mother.

The Buisport, through which we passed the next morning, is one of the most charming spots in the Marico highlands; it is traversed by a spruit, that retains water all through the year in the deep hollows of its rocky beds. We crossed the spruit several times; the travelling was very rough, and we had to proceed with the greatest caution, but all our trouble was amply repaid by the enjoyment of the picturesque scenery of the glen. Enclosed on every hand by the most diversified rocks, sometimes wooded, sometimes perpendicular, and sometimes running in terraces, it presents a prospect singularly attractive.

It likewise offers no little interest to the student of natural history. Bushbocks, pallahs, klipp-springers, apes and baboons, and some smaller animals of the feline race are amongst the most common mammals, while leopards, lynxes, and koodoos are by no means rare. The variety of birds, snakes, insects, and plants is most remarkable. With the exception of the two kinds of bustard, I found nearly all the birds that I have hitherto mentioned, and besides these, I saw some quails, two new species of thrushes, a wryneck and two rollers.

The plateau upon which we entered at the farther

end of the pass was splendid meadow-land, cultivated in many places. On the east and west it sloped towards the foot of the Notuany and Zeerust heights. We followed these hills for some distance in a south-



BAHARUTSE DRAWING WATER.

westerly direction, until we came to the valley of the upper Notuany, that was only divided by one ridge from the Matebé valley just in front of us, being cultivated over about half its area. This was a token of the proximity of Linokana, a Baharutse

town, of the agriculture of which I had already heard very glowing reports.

At the distance of only a few miles from its source the Notuany was flowing in a deep entrenched bed, across which a few trunks of trees had been thrown, forming a primitive bridge, over which we had no alternative but to take our waggon. Once through the valley, we were at the Linokana hollow, in the centre of which, and extending up its northern and eastern sides, lay the town of the same name.

The reeds in the Matebe teemed with animal life. Morning and evening were the best opportunities of watching their movements, but at those times we could see the grey wild cat creeping stealthily after snipes and long-tailed cape-finches; the water-lizard lying craftily in wait for its prey; or occasionally the caracal driven by hunger from its rocky lair to seek a meal in the security of the reeds of the river-bed.

In the eastern portion of the valley, our attention was directed to a group of trees near some well-cultivated fields, conspicuous among them being some eucalyptus, two feet in diameter, and certainly not much less than sixty feet high. Beneath their shade stood several houses built in European style. These were the quarters of a missionary, whose instruction and example have had such a beneficial influence upon the Baharutse, that they have become the most thriving agriculturists of all the Transvaal Bechuanas. The name of this missionary is Thomas

Jensen, and he is a representative of the Hermannsburg Society. He received us most kindly, and introduced me to Moilo (or Moiloa) the chief, as well as to Chukuru and other chiefs who resided on the hills. Moilo was a tall, grey-headed man, with hard features, but of a kindly disposition; he was a faithful vassal of the Transvaal Republic, considerate



CHUKURU, CHIEF OF THE BAHARUTSE.

for his followers, and in many respects superior to most of the neighbouring rulers. He introduced me to his sons, none of whom, however, he considered competent to succeed him as chief; the son of a relative living in Moshaneng, a scion of the old Bechuana royal family, being, with his sanction, universally regarded as the rightful heir.

Each of the larger farms in the town possessed a plough, and waggons could be seen in considerable numbers, standing amidst the cone-shaped huts. Following Mr. Jensen's advice, the people have turned the Matebe springs to good account; not only have they conducted the water into the town so as to ensure a good supply for domestic purposes, but they have cut trenches through their fields and orchards, thereby securing a thorough irrigation. The adult male population, besides paying a poll-tax of ten shillings to the Transvaal, pledged themselves to provide a certain number of beasts of burden in times of war. Mr. Jensen was entrusted with the collection of the tax, but, although he handed over as much as 400*l.* annually to the Government, he received no remuneration whatever for his trouble.

In the fields round the mission-building maize and wheat were growing, and in the gardens adjacent to the dwelling peaches, apricots, pears, figs, oranges, and citrons were thriving admirably, and, together with the vegetables, contributed a welcome addition towards the support of the modest establishment. The little flower-garden revived pleasant recollections by the abundance of old favourites it contained; there were roses, both as standards and climbers, irises, lilacs with their graceful bloom, and carnations with their pleasant fragrance; tulips and hyacinths had been in bloom, but had now gone off.

The family life of the missionary beneath the blue-gum trees on the Matebe was quite idyllic in its peacefulness; nothing could surpass the ex-



BAHARUTSE VILLAGE.

cellence of the pattern which it set to the dusky population which surrounded it. My own pleasure for the time, however, was seriously damped by the intelligence which Mr. Jensen said he had received from Zanzibar on good authority, that Livingstone had fallen a victim to dysentery by the Bangweolo Lake. At the same time he told me that the companion of Livingstone's first journey was still alive.

The Baharutse possess large herds of cattle, but the periodic recurrence of lung-disease is so fatal, that they lose very large numbers of them.¹

Linokana (from *li* = *the* and *nokana* = a *little river*), during the lifetime of Moilo, was called by his name in his honour. As Karl Mauch has already observed, it is a place where a naturalist may spend weeks with advantage. With the exception of mammalia, nearly all kinds of animals abound. The heights (the eastern of which is called the To, or Elephant hill, and the northern the Po, or Buffalo hill), as well as the meadows and marshes on the Matebe, and the woods on the Notuany, exhibit an immense variety of birds, amongst which birds of prey, long-tailed finches, bee-catchers, green doves, and purple herons especially predominate.

On the 16th we turned our backs upon the hos-

¹ In my opinion it is only a strong Government measure and the free provision of sulphuric acid, to be used diluted, that will be of any avail to check this disorder, which annually costs a large sum of money that ought to be saved.

pitiable fields of Moilo, proceeding southwards towards Zeerust. The next farm of any considerable extent that we came to was that belonging to Martin Zwart, whom we found engaged in distilling peach-brandy; he was the owner of two farms here, and had purchased several others on the frontier, but nevertheless he was by no means in flourishing circumstances; his love of hunting had prevented him from ever steadily devoting himself to farm life and, like many others, he had failed to get on. During the twenty-one years in which he had been a hunter, he had killed as many as 294 elephants.

Near the sources of the Notuany I took an excursion up the valley to Oosthuisen's farm. He resides in a lovely hollow, with several of his relations. His property contains a certain quantity of copper ore, which is collected by the natives, and, after being smelted, is made into bracelets and other ornaments. He cultivated maize, wheat, and tobacco, and spent a good deal of his time in tanning skins purchased from hunters coming back from the interior. Returning by Zwart's farm, we proceeded for two hours, and reached Zeerust, the headquarters of the local government for the Marico district. Though containing little more than forty houses, the little town possessed a Dutch church, surrounded by high walls, behind which, during the recent unsettled state of things, the population sought refuge.

Zeerust is situated on the Little Marico, which wends its way eastwards through the hills to join

the Great Marico. Nearly the whole of the district is highland, traversed by a multitude of brooks, and broken by some exceedingly fertile valleys; in comparison with the rest of the Transvaal, it may be said to be fairly cultivated; a part of it is covered with mimosas and various kinds of underwood; good pasturage for cows and horses may be seen almost everywhere. The farms lie close together, but although garden produce appeared to occupy a certain amount of attention, it was only in a few instances that we saw anything like abundance, the farmers, being, as I have said, addicted to elephant-hunting, and giving all their profits to that expensive amusement. The prohibition of hunting decreed by the Bechuana chiefs may probably compel these enthusiasts to stay at home, and by inducing them to mind their farms, may tend to bring about a more prosperous condition of the district.

Quitting Zeerust on the 19th, we made our way up the valley of the Little Marico. After passing several farms in the main valley and side valleys, and on the slopes, bearing the names of Quarifontein, Quaggafontein, Kaffirkraal, and Denkfontein, we emerged on to the Hooge-Veldt (high field), which is one of the most extensive grass plains on the South African plateau. The Zwart Ruggens (black ridges) were visible on the east. The plain abounds with game, and forms the eastern portion of the high land between the Molapo and the Harts River, where both of them, as well as the Marico

and many of their affluents, take their rise; its subsoil consists of the grey limestone which I have so frequently mentioned. We only passed two farms hereabouts, Pitfontein and Witfontein, and these lay in small depressions that seemed to lead down to the Harts River.

On the 22nd we commenced a gradual descent, and entered the valley of the Makokspruit, in which the Makokskraal is situated. In this valley was a farm, the owner of which was a relative of a man whom I had attended in the diamond-fields. Although they were very poor, the people were very anxious to treat us hospitably. Next day we came to the valley of the upper Schoenspruit; the stream was flowing freely, and all along its shores farm followed farm in close succession. Between the Schoenspruit and Potchefstroom we had to cross several low ridges, the south-western spurs of the Hooge Veldt lying parallel to the Mooi and to the affluents of the Schoen.

I discovered an interesting rocky pass on the first ridge on the way to Potchefstroom, with walls of quartzite nearly semicircular, and rising almost perpendicularly. The farm shut in by them was called Klipport; another, a little further on, was called Klipfontein, the quartzite veins in the ferruginous slate being here also quite apparent.

Arrived at Potchefstroom, I carried out my intention of selling two of my bullocks, as I had come to the end of my resources. Here, too, I said good-bye to my three companions, two of whom, Eber-

wald and Boly, went off to the Lydenburg gold-diggings, trusting to be rewarded with better fortune than they had found in the diamond-fields.

I travelled thirty-four miles the next day, meeting on my route a large number of waggons containing emigrants, merchants, and canteen-keepers, all on their way to Lydenburg, their thirst for gold being now as ardent as once it had been for diamonds. I halted at Klerksdorp only till evening, when I hurried on to the Estherspruit. On the 1st of April I forded the Bamboespruit, and after crossing the Vaal, seventeen miles below Christiana, at Blignaut's Pont, I arrived in Dutoitspan on the 7th.

Of all my curiosities, of which I brought back forty cases closely packed, I considered my ethnographical specimens, 400 in number, the most valuable; but in addition to these I had a great collection of insects, horns, plants, reptiles, skins of quadrupeds and birds, minerals, skeletons, spiders, crustaceans, mollusks, and fossils.

Although I had succeeded somewhat better than during my former journey in making a cartographical survey of the route, many obstacles with which the reader has been made acquainted in the previous pages, prevented me from making a map as complete as I desired.

My pecuniary position was now very much what it had been on my first appearance in Dutoitspan; to say the truth, it was rather worse, for immediately

on my arrival, an attorney called upon me to fulfil my obligations with respect to the bond into which I had entered on behalf of the young man who absconded; and very shortly afterwards I was obliged to pay off the 117*l.* which had been advanced to me before starting. My necessities compelled me forthwith to dispose of the greater portion of my skins and ostrich feathers, and I had to part with my waggon and team for whatever prices they would fetch. For a time my difficulties seemed to increase, as it was at least a month before I could work up anything like a remunerative practice.

I took the smallest of houses, consisting only of a single room, in one of the side streets; it was built of clay, and had a galvanized iron roof; there was a shed of the same materials close to its side; and the whole stood in a little yard containing a well, two sides of which were blocked up by a stable. For this accommodation I had to pay a rent of 5*l.* a month.

By June, however, I had succeeded in working up so much practice that I was obliged to keep a saddle-horse, and very shortly had to procure a chaise and a couple of ponies in addition. The winter of 1874 was a bad time in the central diggings; the measles broke out, and for several weeks I had to pay as many as forty visits a day; and, when the sickness was at its height, the average number was fifty-two.

From the very commencement of the increase in my business, I set about the preparations for my

third and most important journey. I purchased a new waggon, and gradually got together a team of ten picked oxen. Offers to accompany me were freely volunteered on all sides, but my experience made me aware that I could not be too particular in the choice of my associates. I had a half-caste Cape-servant, Jan Van Stahl, who soon proved a great comfort to me; he could not only write both Dutch and English, but very quickly fell into the way of helping me in my preparation of medicines; he was, moreover, a very excellent accountant. I made the acquaintance, too, of a young man engaged as a clerk in one of the stores, who was manifestly superior both in education and manners to the generality of his order; and having thoroughly satisfied myself as to the integrity of his character, I made him the offer of accompanying me. His employers were at that time relinquishing their business, and he came and resided with me. His name was Theunissen. He became a good friend, and remained with me more than a year, until we reached the Zambesi, where he quitted me on account of his fear of fever.

It was a disappointment to me that Van Stahl's dread of lions prevented his going with me; but Pit Dreyer, the shepherd, decided to accompany me in his place.

Previous to this time, and throughout my stay, the general state of things in the diggings had been undergoing very considerable change. More than a quarter of the white population had left, returning

either to the colony, to their homes in the Orange Free State, or to Europe, except that many of them had migrated to the gold-diggings in the Transvaal. Much greater care, too, was being bestowed upon the buildings, iron and wooden, that were being put up in Kimberley.

A great many of the people, moreover, were expressing themselves dissatisfied with the Governor in a way that led to an open revolt very soon after my departure.

Since 1872 the diamonds themselves had depreciated in value, although the "claims" had grown into higher demand, as they were worked with larger capital and improved machinery.

In November I took a fortnight's holiday, in anticipation of my prolonged absence. I went to the Vaal, and pitched my camp at the mouth of the Harts River, where the time sped rapidly away in hunting-excursions, and in seeking new materials for my scientific collection.

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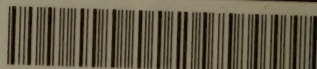
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